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[MR. VERMONT'S ARRIVAL.]

## ADRIEN LEROY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF  
"Maurice Duran," "Pickle Fortune," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER VII.

Where's that palace whereunto foul things  
Sometimes intrude not? *Shakespeare.*

If Lady Constance felt any pain at the sharp, bitter words with which the baron left her it was, like all other undignified emotions, carefully kept hidden within her breast. It was against the tenets of the order to which she belonged to show the pain of a wound or the delight of a gratified passion. Lady Constance Tremaine was patrician to the core. So the baron strode out on to the terrace with his thrust unparried or unreturned, and Lady Constance rose languidly and retired to her boudoir.

If Adrien Leroy, the prince of the fashionable world and the heir to all Barminster, was near at hand it behoved her to look her best, that she might, as the baron had bidden her, win the heart as well as work the jacket.

Lady Constance, beautiful as a hothouse flower at all times, could, if she liked, make herself surpassingly lovely, a thing to strike astonishment into the hearts of beholders and call up visions in their eyes of the mystic-tinted beauties of the Lelys in the Leroy galleries.

Her maid, a Frenchwoman, who had tired Imperial forms, understood the half-bend of the queenly head, when her mistress said, in the low but courteous accents with which she addressed her inferiors: "Mathilde, Mr. Adrien arrives to-day."

"Yes, miladi," responded the maid, and glided towards the dressing-room.

But now faint clouds of dust rose from the roads that like serpents twined towards the castle, the clouds grew larger and larger and soon, amidst a stir of retainers, Adrien Leroy's courier dashed up to the gates at the courtyard, and in accordance with the time-honoured custom, still upheld and rigidly enforced by my lord the baron, blew the brazen horn that swung by a steel chain against the heavy portals.

With a clang the porters threw open the gates, and the courier, an important gentleman, who had preceded his young lord through half the towns in the civilized world, proclaimed that his master's carriage was on the way.

Instantly, although the bustle of preparation had been going on unremittingly since the moment the baron had announced the news, a confused host of men-servants rushed to and fro for a moment, then settled into seeming order, ready to seize bridle or reins, packages, and portmanteaus.

"My young lord," as Adrien Leroy was always called by the people in defiance of Burke and the order of precedence, "my young lord is well?" asked the porter, a white-haired servitor of the courtyard.

The courier bowed with gracious condescension. "Quite, and handsome as ever. Ah, monsieur," to the baron's valet, who appeared at the door, followed by a second bearing the baron's clothes, which the valet was too great to carry himself. "The compliments of the morning. My lord the baron is well?"

"I thank you, yes," replied the Frenchman, between whom and the German courier there was eternal enmity. "And so my young lord is on the road? On wheels or saddle?"

"Saddle," returned the courier. "But the carriage accompanies him. The blue suite, I presume."

The Frenchman shrugged his shoulders. He was not groom of the chambers, nor majordomo, he retorted, sententiously, and away bounded the German to find some other official and ascertain where his lord was to be located.

Half an hour afterwards the clouds of dust resolved themselves into half a dozen gentlemen on horseback, as many grooms, and a travelling-carriage bringing up the rear at a distance of a quarter of a mile.

Lady Constance saw the cavalcade, and waiting till the rich-toned voice was within hearing, stepped from her room on to the balcony and leaned over with a witching smile as with a clatter and a clanging of the horn Adrien and his friends swept into the courtyard below.

The gentlemen's hats flew off as if by magic, and Adrien Leroy, moving his horse forward, looked up, still hat in hand, and with his courtly smile said:

"We thought we had left the sun behind us, sweet cousin, but she is still overhead!"

She looked down upon him with an increase of sweetness in the smile and raised a flower to her lips.

"That's a Persian compliment, Adrien; the East has spoiled you. Have you enjoyed your ride?"

"Not half so much as the welcome," he murmured back, catching the flower which she let drop, and raising it to his lips.

She smiled again and turned her eyes with her leisurely serene grace to the others, who, still uncovered, waited for the boon of a word.

"Ah, my lord, I did not know you were coming, but—as the marquis's face dropped—" unexpected pleasures are sweet as rain in August. What a beautiful horse; your new purchase? Mr. Pomfroy, I have read your book—and like it."

The celebrated author bowed to the saddle.

"Duke—it is too far to shake hands—you cannot reach."

And she slid one dainty hand to the duke, who, riding up, retorted with true French gaiety:

"No mortal can reach so far," and bent under the hand as if to receive its benediction.

Lady Constance smiled and drew back.

"All farther courtesies and compliments on an equal platform," she said, nodding her adieu, and the gentlemen, laughing and chatting, sprang from their saddles and passed under the porched entrance into the castle.

Leaning on the duke's arm Adrien passed up the great hall, lined by its faithful and obsequious servants, into the grand reception-room, where in the mediæval fireplaces great fires blazed and sparkled on the steel dog-irons which still held their own in Barminster Castle against all modern innovations in the shape of register stoves or grates.

The room was empty, but before all had passed in, the silken purple curtains of one of the entrances were pushed aside, and the mighty baron entered.

He was still in his loose velvet dressing-gown, and as he strode forward over the mosaic floor looked

like a Doge of ancient Venice. His stern face softened into a welcome and his long, thin hand was extended as the duke came forward to meet him.

"Ah, duke, so you keep my boy company, and you, marquis! gentlemen, you are welcome, no need to remind you of that, I know. Adrien," and he turned with his face stern again, but courteous, "you have had a fine day. Ride or drive?"

"Ride, sir," answered Adrien, his voice sounding like a sweeter, softer echo of the old man's rich, deep, and somewhat grim tones.

"The roads are in good order, eh, duke? But a change still from the tan of the park."

"Of which, for my part, I am heartily weary," said the duke, with his cheery laugh. "Give me nature without a corset."

"And that you will get at Barminster," said the baron, with a smile. "We are all nature, marquis, rugged, rough-handed nature, but true."

As he spoke he glanced again at Adrien, as if his thoughts had strayed. Then, with a start, he passed from his side and in his haughty, but thoroughly courtly style, welcomed the remaining guests.

As his hand took the last, Anchester Pomfrey's, he looked down the room, back at Adrien, and gave vent to an unmistakable sigh of relief.

Adrien Leroy, almost as if in response to it, said: "Well, we are hungry; too early for your luncheon, sir?"

"It is set in the south corridor," said the baron, then turning to the duke with the easy bearing of an equal in rank but a superior in years, he added: "I am an old man and the despot of Egypt has little charm for me; your younger days should still find comfort in baked meats. Go and demolish them. I'll to my prayers, as Hamlet says—or should have said."

And with a slight bend and a parting smile, he strode through the curtained doorway.

Adrien Leroy and his guests strolled up the long hall, and, by way of a few marble steps, flanked by the heraldic stags bearing a coronet, into the south corridor.

Here a magnificent luncheon had been laid, and Lady Penelope and Lady Constance were awaiting them.

Bowing over the elder lady's hand while his friends clustered round the younger, Adrien, in the low, half-weary tone habitual with him, murmured the usual salutations and sank into the seat at the head of the table.

Lady Constance sat beside her aunt, but within reach of the young lord, and within sight.

Half a dozen servants stood at a respectful distance waiting with watchful eyes for some chance gesture to imply a wish which they might gratify.

The meal—if meal it could be called—commenced and for a few minutes silence profound dropped on all, then Adrien, setting down his glass, said, with his low, light laugh:

"I was really hungry. Lady Constance, there is a witchery in Barminster air."

"Or rather in its sweet lady's presence," said the gallant duke.

"I do not know what appetite is without these walls," added Adrien.

"And yet so seldom here," said Lady Constance, glancing down at her plate, stained only by a few grapes.

"Business and the cares of state," quoted Adrien, with his rare smile. "But I might retaliate; you seldom leave them. Why does the court miss its rarest pearl, sweet coz?"

"Does it miss it?" she said, with a smile of incredulity. "Scarcely, when the casket overbrims always. But, come, you are to tell us all about the race. Are you going to win it? Aunt is dying to know, are you not?"

And she turned to Lady Penelope, who made her usual answer:

"Yes, my love."

"Oh, Adrien always wins," said the marquis. "That is a matter of course. But you have seen the King last, Lady Constance, surely?"

"Oh, yes," she replied. "He is exercised on the lawn before my window every morning and receives due admiration. He is a fine fellow, and in what you gentlemen call 'fine form.'"

Adrien smiled.

"Poor King Cole; to-morrow he runs for his dynasty. By the way, Ireton, are any of the other horses down?"

"Yes," said Ireton. "A lot my man saw at the station."

"The rough-legged screw among them, I suppose," said the duke.

"No," said Chadleigh. "He was not. My man remarked his absence."

"Perhaps the owner has learnt wisdom and withdrawn him," said Adrien.

"It is to be hoped so, for his own sake," laughed the marquis.

The topic so lightly touched led off to town news, of which Pomfrey had a budget, which in true literary style he unfolded delightfully.

Amongst a peal of well-bred laughter the ladies rose, and the gentlemen hastened to draw back the curtain for them to pass.

"In half an hour then," said Lady Constance, looking back at Adrien, and referring to a ride he had begged of her.

"In half an hour," he said, inclining his head, and then passed into the hall.

The gentlemen, still standing, sipped their last draughts of wine and planned out the remainder of the day.

It was Liberty Hall at Barminster Castle; neither guests nor host dragged upon one another, and all programmes were unfettered.

While they talked Adrien strode to the window.

"By Jove! I had forgotten Jasper," he said, with a slight elevation of his straight eyelids.

"Here he is, stepping out of the carriage like a Roman emperor in tweeds."

He nodded, with his short smile, to Mr. Vermont, as, surrounded by servants who seemed anxious to carry him bodily into the hall, so eager were they to serve him, he pushed them aside and with his amiable smile strolled into the reception-room.

As he entered at one end the baron pushed the curtains aside at the other, and seeing him, stopped in his stride and stood dark and statuesque, apparently unconscious of his son and his guests, who were looking on from the entrance to the corridor.

The cloud was dark on the baron's brow, for the absence of Mr. Vermont from the party had raised the hope in his mind that his son had left the "adventurer" in London. It was a rude shock and one that intensified the hatred the old man felt for the smiling plebeian to find that hope dispelled.

Mr. Jasper saw the cloud, but his smile did not lose a tittle of its amiability; his step, soft and assured, never slackened nor quickened as, approaching with well-feigned if not genuine ease, he bowed before the tall, princely figure.

"Good morning, my lord! I trust I see you in perfect health?"

The baron struggled to forget all but the duties of a host, bent his white head and extended his hand grimly.

"You do, sir. I am in good health. You, I fear, are an invalid?"

And he turned his sharp eyes with a bitter smile towards the close carriage from which the dainty Mr. Vermont had just alighted.

"No, my lord; quite well, I thank you," he replied, as if perfectly unconscious of the irony.

"But I have acquired some wisdom in my journey through life; enough to teach me that all other journeys—nay, that included, should be taken as comfortably as possible. I prefer the ease of the cushion to the discomfort of the saddle, and the clear, though confined, air of a travelling carriage to an atmosphere of dust. Am I not right?"

"Perfectly, no doubt, Mr. Vermont should know what suits his peculiar constitution best," said the baron, adding, with the smile which always made his thrust more bitter: "Different bloods require different treatment, I presume."

Mr. Vermont smiled, and as he passed on to the corridor muttered, perhaps not inaudibly:

"Your lordship does indeed presume."

Then as the baron, with lowered brows, strode away, Mr. Jasper tripped on, in his soft, easy fashion, and laughingly sat himself at the luncheon-table.

"What an amusing dog that Norgate of yours is, Adrien," he said. "He took the spare hack down, and I have had the greatest treat in the world gazing at his miseries. The fellow has no more idea of a horse than a Venetian; he'll be sore for a week, and the animal has ruined his new suit."

Then amidst the laughter of the aristocrats, who however much they hated him never refused to be amused by him, Mr. Jasper drew an imitable picture of the luckless valet and mimicked his contortions and mishaps with the supreme art of a comedian.

Adrien had passed out in the middle of the sketch and, with a cigar between his lips, sauntered into the courtyard and thence to the stables.

The grooms and keepers flew about, tugging at their forelocks, and one was dispatched for the head groom, who made his appearance, struggling into his coat and coughing with embarrassed respect.

His master nodded.

"Good morning, Markham. Where is the King?"

"In the south stable, my lord," replied the man, fumbling in his pocket for the keys. "Would your lordship like to see him?"

Adrien nodded and strode off to the stables, the groom following him.

As the man inserted the key in the lock, Adrien said:

"No one has the entrée of the stable but yourself, Markham?"

"No one, my lord. I'm always here when he's being littered or fed. Not a soul touches him without I'm

at his side. He's in fine condition, my lord, I never saw him in better."

Adrien passed in and laid his hand upon the silky coat of his great racehorse. The dainty creature pricked up its finely-pointed ears and turned to his lord and master with a whinny of delight.

"He does look well," admitted Adrien. "Has he had his gallop this morning?"

"Yes, my lord; but would you like to see him across the paddock?"

"Yes," said Adrien. "By the way, who rides him to-morrow?"

"Peacock, my lord."

"Ah, the new jockey," said Adrien.

"Yes, Mr. Jasper's lad," said the groom.

"A good seat?" asked Adrien.

"Capital, never saw better, my lord, and weighs nothing. I'll send for him, my lord, if you would like to see him."

"Do," said Adrien.

And Mr. Markham, setting a whistle in his mouth, produced, as if by magic, half a dozen stable helps from the yard.

"Tell Mr. Peacock his lordship wishes to see him," said Mr. Markham.

And away started the boys.

In a few minutes, during which the head groom led the precious King into the yard and saddled him, the jockey arrived.

Mr. Markham had called him a lad, but in truth he was a middle-aged man with the stunted stature of a boy—an odd face and figure to look at and scarcely one to admire for nature, not satisfied with robbing him of manhood's strength and stature, had defrauded him of every pretension to comeliness of feature.

Adrien looked him over critically.

"You ride the King to-morrow?" he asked.

"I do, my lord," replied the dwarf.

"Take him round the paddock," said Adrien.

And the jockey, throwing off the thick coat by means of which, in addition to three large woollen comforters, he retained his skeleton condition, sprang into the saddle, and, keeping a tight rein on the tender mouth, took the racer to the long strip of meadow land.

Adrien stood with his arms folded, but with a glow of pride in his dark eyes, watching the bird-like flight of the superb animal, as almost unencumbered by the feather-weight on his back, he sped round the paddock, and returned fresh and lightly to the starting-point.

Adrien nodded, and the jockey dropped from his saddle.

"You will do," said his master; "ride like that to-morrow and we shall win. There is claret money for you—no beer, mind."

And, as he turned away, he held out a ten-pound note to him.

The jockey stared at the note for a moment, then crouching almost like a dog he came forward and took it by its extreme edge.

Adrien smiled.

"Don't be afraid, man; one would think you expected a blow."

The man started, took the note, and, with three tugs at his forehead, turned to the heap of coats and neckcloths.

Adrien walked away, but happening to glance back at Markham, who was re-covering the King, saw that the withered morsel of humanity, with one arm in his great-coat, was still gazing after him with the same curious stare.

"These poor creatures sweat their brains away as well as their flesh," he thought, adding lightly, "Foolish to give him anything till after the race. I must tell Markham to see he doesn't get drunk to-night, or the King will get away and run wild."

In the courtyard Lady Constance's Arabian and his own hunter were being walked, ready saddled.

As he turned in her ladyship emerged from the arched entrance.

Lady Constance had been blessed by nature with a fine figure. Art, as represented by French modistes and German tailors, had put the extreme finishing touch, the results were that Lady Constance Tremaine, whether in court silks or blue riding habit, was that thing of beauty which is a joy for ever in the minds of those who have once seen it.

Beautiful as a fashionable Venus she looked, with her gathered skirts of her habit in her perfectly gloved hands, and another besides Adrien Leroy was sensible of her divine loveliness.

That other was Mr. Jasper Vermont, who, with that powerful tact which procured him access to all, elected himself as chief slave to her ladyship, and whenever he was at Barminster Castle in some inexplicable way constituted himself as her fetch-and-carry and most obedient creature.

Now it was he who passed the inspecting hand over her saddle and looked to the girths. It was he of all the rest who, as Adrien took her tiny foot to help her to the saddle, recovered the handkerchief which she dropped from her hand. It was



he who at the last moment adjusted the bridle, and it was he who bowed lowest and smiled sweetest as with a rear and a clatter of polished hoofs the horses started off, followed by Lady Constance's sedate groom.

## CHAPTER VIII.

What is friendship but a name,  
A charm that lulls to sleep,  
A shade that follows wealth or fame  
And leaves the watch to weep?

Goldsmith.

THE dinner hour at the castle was eight.

At five, as it commenced to grow dusk, Adrien and Lady Constance dashed into the courtyard.

The groom, well mounted as he was, panted a mile away.

On Lady Constance's face there sat a smile serene and satisfied—a smile vivid enough to show her pearly teeth and lend a gleam of colour to her cheeks.

On Adrien Leroy's there lingered, almost brooded, that air of languid weariness which not even the excitement of a gallop with so beautiful a woman as his companion could banish.

Leaping from his saddle, he stood bareheaded at her barb's side, and with a turn of his steely muscles swung her to the ground.

As he did so, her acute eyes caught the faint weariness and the smile deepened—in another woman whose emotions were less in check it would have vanished.

"We meet you at dinner," she said. "Until then adieu."

"Adieu!" he returned, bowing low.

And she glided into the hall murmuring inaudibly:

"Does he love me, or does he not?"

Adrien went straight to his apartments, which consisted of a magnificent suite provided with a separate and private staircase, and a detached set of servants.

Norgate, who knew how to interpret each varying shade of his lord's face, just glanced at it, and then stole away to prepare the mid-day bath.

Adrien Leroy, with all his strength, great powers of endurance, and nobility of manhood, was an extreme Sybarite. If life were to consist of one long rest on beds of rose leaves, for him the perfumed couch must have no creases. He was thorough even in his luxuries; his habits were as softly planned as those of a sultan; all that modern art could do to elevate luxury to a perfected science was enlisted on his behalf, and yet the world of fashion which so adored him never applied the title of dandy to him.

He was something more—a man so earnest that even in the matter of doing nothing he would, as Mortimer once said, "do it well, or leave it undone."

So his bath was prepared, and he enjoyed it, after which he lay wrapped in eiderdown toilet robes smoking from his Eastern narghile. Then, when the shade of weariness had given place to a serene and placid gravity Norgate was summoned and the regulation evening dress was donned.

At eight the great gong sounded through every corridor of the immense place. Norgate stood with the dinner carts in one hand, his lord's handkerchief in the other.

Adrien glanced at the carts carelessly, then, returning it, prepared to descend.

"Where does my lord the baron dine?" he asked.

"In his private rooms, sir," replied Norgate.

Dinner was served in regal magnificence in the small Veronese chamber, as it was called, from the walls being partially covered with gems by that great master.

Conversation ran principally upon the race of the morrow, Lady Constance displaying almost a mild enthusiasm, and confessing that she had backed the King for a thousand pounds, which, she added, the baron had given her for the purpose.

Adrien looked slightly pleased. Mr. Vermont smiled amiably.

"What a business man would call a good investment, Lady Tremaine. The King is safe to win. Has the baron backed him heavily, do you know?"

"Yes, but, oh, that's a secret!" and her ladyship smiled. "He is proud of the horse, you know."

Mr. Jasper smiled still more.

"The King will carry more than his own weight of gold to-morrow," he said, then glided from the subject to an account of the Countess Evelyn's ball, lending it an interest derivable entirely from the piquant style of the narration, and with a thousand artistic touches amusing her ladyship to the extent of an encomium on his powers as a reporter.

"You have eyes like that queer insect, Mr. Vermont, in the back of your head, surely; or do you mount on invisible wings to the chandeliers, and take a bird's-eye view?"

Mr. Vermont laughed.

"Some have eyes and some have not," he said, showing his even teeth.

"Do you know," said Lady Constance, turning to

the duke, who had preserved a regal silence during the progress of his favourite course, "Lady Penelope has been besieging the baron during the last two months and has, I think, nearly carried the citadel."

"Ah! and what is the motive of the attack?" said the duke, putting down the fork, and deciding to lose the last morsel for beauty's sake. "Does she want to cut down the shrubbery? lay out the deer park into a Dutch landscape garden, or a body of artillery to fire salutes morning and evening from the battlements?"

"As they did for six weeks against the Cropheads in His Majesty's time," said Lady Constance, bowing her head slightly, as was the custom with all the Leroyes when the martyr's name was spoken. "No, neither of those; but Lady Penelope wants a bal masque in the great salon. You have seen it, it is in the east wing. Adrien, if you would add your word we should get it; won't you do so?"

Adrien roused himself. He had been sitting within a few feet and yet not heard a word.

Lady Constance repeated herself.

"A bal masque?" he said, dreamily. Yes, an excellent idea; but if the baron has refused you it is scarcely likely that he will yield to me. Why will not Park House do for you, Lady Penelope? I hand it over to you from cellar to garret with absolute authority. Nay, more; I will bind myself your faithful slave till all the arrangements are made."

Lady Penelope laughed.

"No, Park House is too modern, and, excuse me, too common. Princely cavaliers and royalists would be out of place within walls that had never enclosed anything more romantic than the modern sable costumes. Here in Barminster Castle the scene would be but a resurrection—a reflection of the reality. Remember that kings and princes of the blood have trod the boards of the salon times without number, and that these walls are to the manner born of all that is romantic and noble. No; here in the grand salon, or nowhere!"

Adrien bowed.

"So be it," he said; "I will do my best. If the baron be inexorable I'll treasure up your words, and slay his obstinacy with their eloquence."

Lady Penelope rose.

"Not mine," she said, smiling at her beautiful niece, "but Constance's. I but repeated word for word her onslaught on the baron."

Adrien opened the door for them to pass out, and returned to his seat with something like a sigh. None noticed it save Jasper Vermont, and he, while he mused, "What is on him now, I wonder?" said, gaily:

"Come, Adrien, this Burgundy has passed you twice. Such wine, too. Ah, when this has gone and its like, what will become of us? Away with Ninevah, down with dynasties, but save us these old nectars, and fate may do what it pleases."

Adrien smiled.

"Jasper, you are a butterfly," he said.

"And what is better?" retorted the wit. "Is life worth having when the flowers are gone? Who would desire more? Beauty on the wings, ambrosial essence on the palate, and—puff!—forgetfulness, sleep when the summer has gone. Never despise the butterflies, but if you have more soon than you can conveniently carry give it to the bee and the ant, than whom the world holds no greater fools. Fill me again, sirrah. Now, listen, here is the last piece of scandal, duke, and he leant over with a slight glitter in his small eyes. "You all know Montgarret—poor old ant—how many thousands has he carried away from his deep, dark mines, to and fro, like the indefatigable miserable insect he is! Lady Montgarret, the fair flower of the day, how beautiful, how serene. What a partner to rejoice the heart of our amiable mole. He marries her! Poor ant! On the wings of the summer breeze comes the despised butterfly, little Gerald Fitzroy. Presto! he spies the poor ant's flower, covets, and—presto! robs the wiser insect of its treasure. Now mark you the contrast between folly and wisdom. The ant—that Solomon of industry—takes the loss of his flower to heart and dies of a rupture of that eccentric organ. The butterfly—whom you despise, my dear Adrien—sips the nectar from his ill-gotten flower till the taste palls, then flies to fresh fields and pastures new!"

Soft and pleasing as was the voice, poetically rendered as was the fable, the listeners could not suppress a shudder.

All save Adrien, who, with a grim sternness, said, as he rose:

"Change your types, Jasper, from butterfly to snake, and from ant to man, and give us another sequel. Who sucked the nectar from flower of mine should find death at the bottom of his draught."

Jasper laughed silently.

"Ah, how brave! What energy, what courage is wasted in these modern times. You should have lived in the age of that noble ancestor of yours who stands in the hall—or his armour at least—sword in hand, always ready for a blow. Hah! Hah! By the

way, marquis, Pomfrey can tell you a good story about faithless wives. What is it, Pomfrey?"

"Oh," said the author, laughing, "that little girl Lord Noblechild married ran away with Charlie Jukes of the Guards. When his lordship heard it he sent her ladyship's wardrobe and jewels after them, with his compliments to Mr. Jukes, and her ladyship would ruin him quite fast enough even with the stock in hand."

This characteristic anecdote meeting with the proper amount of laughter, the gentlemen adjourned to the silver drawing-room.

This one of the half-dozen small salons in Barminster Castle was decorated à la Watteau, but exclusively in blue and silver.

Lady Constance's dress to match was of the faintest tint of azure with Etruscan silver ornaments sparkling in its rich folds. Blue suited her shell-like complexion, and to-night she looked her best.

Adrien had a passion for music, and possessed a splendid mellow voice, which not one out of a hundred of his friends had ever heard in melody. He was a master of the piano, organ and guitar, but save in the hours of solitude touched neither.

To-night he sank into one of the dainty satin lounges and gave himself up to supreme indolence.

The talk went on round him. Mr. Jasper's voice, soft and silky, with a general laugh following its close, Lady Constance's, mellow and patrician, the duke's, rolling and full of abrupt turns, lulled him into perfect rest, from which he roused himself to beg a song from Lady Constance.

"Yes, and you shall choose."

Adrien rose and turned the music.

"Sing what you please," he said, "or this old ballad."

"Why?" she said. "Do you like it? It is so sad."

"What is it called?" asked Mr. Jasper Vermont, gliding to the piano.

"False Friends," replied Lady Constance.

"Pray let us have that," returned Mr. Jasper, amiably.

And Lady Constance seated herself at the instrument.

Mr. Jasper declared he was devoted to music, and no doubt he was, to judge from the enthusiastic applause with which he received the last notes.

"So sweet, so plaintive. And so true; the words are as good as the music. Let me see, what is the last verse:

"Bitter as the snow in June,  
More bitter than all things else,  
To find more changeful than the moon,  
Your bosom friend so false."

Then, surrounded by admirers, the beautiful songstress sang again song after song.

Mr. Jasper sat a little apart, gazing through a gap in the curtains at that moon which had been so convenient as a subject of comparison to the false friend, and listening with all his ears. Sometimes he turned his sleek face and looked long and with drooped eyelids at the exquisite profile of the singer. At the end of each long, curious glance his eyes would drop on the full-length figure of Adrien Leroy, his friend, stretched in graceful, languid repose. Then he would return to the contemplation of the moon with an expression on his face worthy of the sphinx.

At last Lady Constance would sing no more, and suddenly turned off the attack upon Adrien.

"Will you not sing one for us, only a little one? Do not be ungracious."

He hesitated for a moment, then rose with that old gesture as if dashing off his weariness with a shake of the whole frame and seated himself. For a few minutes his long white hands strayed over the piano dreamily, then in a voice whose richness seized upon the heart with marvellous power, sang two short verses:

"A boy sat in an orchard sweet,  
The moon wrapped night in light,  
But from his aching, searching foot  
Love took flight."

"A man sought all the world afar  
In darkness and the hot sun's light;  
But never nearer hope's bright star  
Love took flight."

In the pause of silence which reigned between the two last words and the amazed applause, Mr. Jasper stood behind the curtains, opened the window and slid out on the terrace.

There he fell against the heavy stone balustrade as if he were fainting; tugging at his immaculate neckcloth, his pale, flaccid face turned up to the moon.

"Heaven! I can't endure it!" he breathed. "His beauty kills me! The sweetness of his voice maddens me! Confound him, how I hate him!"

Mr. Jasper was too indisposed, he explained the next morning at breakfast, to re-enter and say good night. But he was not too indisposed to steal from his room, glide noiselessly down the grand staircase, and drop lightly as a feather from a casement on to

the terrace, and thence set off at a hard pace through the plantations.

At the end of these stood a little cottage, attached to the straw-yard, set apart for any of the sick cattle. At the door of this cottage Mr. Jasper Vermont listened attentively, then, without word of warning, lifted the latch and entered.

A dim light flickered from a stable candlestick, and by that Mr. Jasper made his way to a corner of the room, where upon a small bedstead lay what looked like a misshapen lad.

On touching this with his foot Mr. Jasper elicited a growl, and by means of another kick succeeded in rousing Mr. Peacock, the jockey, from his virtuous slumber.

The little monkey face crinkled in true imp fashion as the bleared eyes saw who the midnight visitor was, and the voice which had so huskily responded to Adrien in the morning more huskily now said:

"Well?"

"Short and polite; wake up!" retorted Mr. Jasper, kicking him again. "Did I not tell you I should be here at twelve, eh, you imp of darkness?"

"You did, gov'nor," sullenly replied Mr. Peacock. "Well, and here I am. You're not drunk, are you? Here, show me your face," and with a cruel grin the soft and amiable Mr. Jasper seized the shrunken cheek of the dwarfed jockey and dragged him by the novel handle like a log of wood to the light. "No, not drunk, but a good way on. Now then; you're sober enough to know what I say, and what I mean. You know what you've got to do to-morrow, eh?"

The creature nodded sulkily.

"Tighten and choke him off at the last hurdle. That's it; and mind you do it neatly too—no clumsy journeyman work, but clean and off-hand. You can do it, you know; it won't be the first little affair you've sold, eh? You sold one too many though, didn't you? and you know what I'll do if you don't work this as it should be done, don't you?"

The man nodded again.

"All right, gov'nor," he muttered. "Don't cut up rough. Everything's square, ain't it?"

"I hope it is," said Mr. Jasper, eyeing him, "or you'll be picking oakum, or whatever legal employment is the fashion at Millbank before to-morrow night. What's the matter with you?" he asked, still scrutinizing the fellow by the same means, namely, the skin of his cheek. "You look all over the sea; what's the matter, eh?" and he tightened his grasp.

The man looked down, then up at the cruel face of his tormentor.

"I've seen him, gov'nor," he said, huskily.

"Him! Whom, you idiot?" rejoined Mr. Jasper.

"Him as we're to sell," replied the man, blinking remorsefully at the candle, and apparently indifferent to the agony which Mr. Jasper was so playfully inflicting with his fat, cruel fingers.

"Oh, and what if you have, you gallows-bird, what if you have?"

"He give me a ten-pun' note," said the man as if to himself. "And he spoke clear and soft-like—clear and soft, kindly-like." Then suddenly wrenching his cheek from Mr. Jasper's grasp he turned his bleared eyes on him savagely. "Leave go my cheek, will yer? It's a darned shame to sell him, and I won't."

Mr. Jasper raised his little fat hand and knocked the diminutive form to the ground as a butcher fells an ox, then, springing on to his chest, raised his fist again.

The jockey put up his hand imploringly, and ground out from his parched throat:

"Gov'nor, gov'nor, what are you goin' to do?"

"Kill you, you cur!" snapped Mr. Jasper. "Do you think I'd let you live till the morning to split? Ha! ha!"

The fist poised itself in the air. The jockey winced.

"Stop, stop!" he croaked, "I'll do it."

(To be continued.)

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF 1874.—The Council have resolved to offer the Society's Gold and Silver Medals in connection with the International Exhibition of 1874. A gold and silver medal is offered in each class, and these medals will be given for any object exhibited which, in the opinion of the Council, shows paramount or very great excellence, whether in respect of the final result, the machinery, method of production, or novelty.

IGNORANCE OF FIRE.—According to Pliny, fire was a long time unknown to some of the ancient Egyptians, and when a celebrated astronomer showed it to them they were absolutely in raptures. The Persians, Phœnicians, Greeks, and several other nations, acknowledged that their ancestors were once without the use of fire, and the Chinese confess the same of their progenitors. Pomponius Mela, Plutarch, and other ancient writers, speak of nations which, at the time when they wrote, knew not the use of fire, or had just learned it. Facts of the same

kind are also attested by several modern nations. The inhabitants of the Marian Islands, which were discovered in 1551, had no idea of fire. Never was astonishment greater than theirs when they saw it on the desert in one of their islands. At first they believed it was some kind of animal that fixed to and fed upon wood.

## THE ORDEAL OF LOVE.

"ENGAGED to him?" cried Aunt Meredith. "You don't tell me so! Why, it's very sudden, or else you are very sly, Lily Perry."

"Auntie," cried Lily, "when people love each other I don't suppose they are long about it. I shouldn't expect much happiness in a man who was three or four years making up his mind to marry me, and offered himself at last perhaps because some other woman wouldn't have him. I might like him ever so much, but I should never feel assured of his love. Ned says the moment he set eyes upon me he knew I was meant for him."

"I know they say it's the right way," said Aunt Meredith. "I never was married, and I'm sure I don't feel that I am an authority in such matters. It's a pretty sort of belief, anyhow; a very pretty one. I hope it's the right one, I'm sure. Well, he's a handsome young man, very handsome."

"Oh, isn't he," cried Lily. "So unlike the common run of men! so everything that is aristocratic, dear fellow! Oh!"

"And I am quite left out in the matter, I presume," said Aunt Meredith.

"Ah, no, auntie dear," said Lily. "Ned is coming to ask you for me to-night."

"And how about James Roberts?" asked auntie.

"Well," said Lily, "James deserves it if he does like me. He's been trying to find out whether I suit him for two years, and expects me to courtesy and say 'Yes, sir; thank you,' whenever he chooses to propose. I declare if I hadn't admired Ned as I do, I'd have accepted him just to show James I'm not waiting for him," and Lily tossed her head disdainfully.

"Well, I like poor James," sighed Aunt Meredith. "He's respectful to old folks. But, however, you are to choose according to your own taste, not to mine, and I hope you'll be very happy; and let the young man come to-morrow evening if he chooses."

And Lily, all in a flutter, ran away to dream over her new-born happiness.

Edward Lawton called that evening, and Lily, having ushered him into her aunt's presence, was going to run away; but the old lady called her back.

"We are going to talk about you, dear," she said, "and I'd rather you should stay. Mr. Lawton, I suppose I had better relieve you at once. You want to marry my niece?"

"Madam," began Ned, "I—I—"

"I know," said the old lady. "Well, you seem to be an agreeable sort of young man, and not bad-looking, and you come of a good family; but what are your pecuniary prospects?"

"Oh, aunt!" cried Lily. "How can you?"

"Mr. Lawton knows these questions are necessary," said Aunt Meredith.

"Indeed, yes," said Ned Lawton. "I have a salary of a hundred and fifty a year, and expectations from my grandfather."

"Expectations are poor things to live on," said Mrs. Meredith. "Can you support a household on your salary?"

"I hope so," said Ned; "but grandpa is old, and—"

"No matter about grandpa," said Mrs. Meredith. "Of course you've heard the fact that Lillian's grandparents left her a large sum of money, and that I am a rich woman, and have no relatives?"

"I may have heard some stories of the kind," said Ned, "but I never believe such things. They are often without foundation."

"Ah, dear!" said Mrs. Meredith. "Well, it was true; but I'm glad you're so sensible a young man, for it's true no longer. Lily and I had both invested our money in an enterprise which at length has ended most disastrously. I've kept the bad news from Lily, but we're utter beggars, and shall have to move into a couple of rooms and take in sewing or something for a living. I'm glad Lily has found a loving husband to watch over her. As for me, it doesn't matter; I'm old, and shall die soon, and my friends will do something for me no doubt, if I come to starving. Bless you, dears, be happy!" and Mrs. Meredith put her handkerchief to her eyes and left the room sobbing.

"Poor auntie!" said Lily; "we'll take care of her, won't we, Ned? We don't care for money, do we, Ned?"

"Oh, no," said Ned; but his tone was doubtful, and he was very quiet and very grave, and took his leave

in a short time, with fewer protestations of affection than are usual on such an occasion.

It was well for Lily that she did not know that outside the door he clenched his fist and muttered:

"What the deuce was I in such a hurry for? How shall I get out of this fix?"

Poor Lily!

Aunt Meredith had said no more than the truth. Lily could not understand how it had happened, but in less than a week they moved into two plain rooms in a very mean little house, and though they did not take in sewing for a living everything was greatly altered.

Lily had thought she would not mind much, but she felt it worse than she thought she should. Besides, the bliss that she had always fancied an engagement would bring was not hers. Ned called but seldom, was cold in his manner when he came and pleaded business engagements, which Lily could not help believing were imaginary, as excuses for his neglect of all those little usual attentions which girls expect.

Sadly the poor little soul sat in her tiny bedroom after she had pretended to retire for the night, and realized the fact that her lover was no lover after all. Indeed it was scarcely a surprise to her when one day a letter came bearing his monogram, in which he asked for a release from his engagement.

"We have both made a mistake," he wrote.

And she wrote back:

"Thank Heaven we have found it out in time!"

But such words only sustained her pride, her heart ached all the same.

Meanwhile James Roberts had come to see them oftener than had been his wont before, and was certainly a great comfort in their loneliness, for Aunt Meredith declared that she could not let their acquaintance know where she had come to live, and Lily had no heart for company; and Lily liked James better than ever before. So it came about so slowly that it was a surprise to her that when, one day, he offered himself to her and she accepted him.

"I'm a poor man, Lily," said he, "but we'll take care of auntie, and we'll get on. I shall have the greatest object in the world for trying to get on now that you belong to me."

So one morning the three, very quietly dressed, walked to the minister's, and Lily and Robert were married. No one would have known it was a wedding party, who had not guessed it, by Robert's face.

"Let's go home this way," said Aunt Meredith, turning down the street where her old house stood. "I want to look at my life-long home. Lily, don't you wish it were ours again?"

"It was a lovely place," said Lily; "but don't fret, auntie."

"No. I won't fret," said Miss Meredith. "But here we are. Ah, dear, what a pretty home it is! How the wisteria vine has grown, and how pleasant the balcony looks. Lily, I am going to see how it looks inside."

"Oh! don't, auntie," cried Lily.

But Mrs. Meredith was on the steps and had rung the bell.

"Dear, dear," said Lily, "how odd; but we mustn't desert her."

Then the door opened. There was a cry of joy, and Mrs. Meredith's old servants rushed out to greet her.

"Come in, children," said the old lady. "There's no reason for you to stand there. This is as much my house as ever it was."

"Has she gone crazy, do you think," asked James, "or is this a joke?"

"I don't know," said Lily, trembling.

"Yes, a joke," said the old lady. "A fine one too. Come in, my dears. I've played a trick, and an old one, to save Lily from fortune-hunters. Nothing ever happened to our money. I transferred it to another investment a year ago, and so am quite safe. As for Lily, she's a baby in such matters. And Robert, you've won an heiress as well as a good girl."

A. O. C.

THE LONDON PARKS.—Considerable improvements are now being carried out both in the Green and Hyde Parks. In the former the entire length of walks have been coated with a covering of white shell gravel. Numerous additional flower beds, which will be immediately planted with the earliest varieties of flowering bulbs and plants, are being constructed. In Hyde Park the Row has been relaid with bright red sand and gravel, the walks renewed, additional shrubberies are being constructed, and flower beds laid out. The island in the Serpentine has proved a great success, as heretofore the waterfowl in the breeding season forsake the Serpentine for the islands in St. James's Park, thus rendering the water almost deserted. Since the construction of the island the ducks have remained on it, and thus there will be no diminution in the number of the birds.





[CHATTERIS DECLARES HIS LOVE.]

JOSEPHINE BEAUVILLIERS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Lady Juliette's Secret," "The Rose of Kemdale," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XIV.

Still with their fires Love tipt his deeper darts.

As once they drew into two burning rings,  
All be ms of love, melting the mighty hearts  
Of captains and of kings. *Tennyson.*

THE news soon spread in a country town like Northwick St. John's; very soon everybody was talking of the engagement of Captain Chatteris to the humpbacked heiress. Mrs. Dalby heard of it. The doctor's lady was not pleased at the news; she had had her own views for her beautiful Diana, and this arrangement entirely upset them.

It was the evening of her ball. None of her guests had yet arrived, but she and Diana, each gracefully dressed, were walking up and down the room looking at the decoration of paper-flowers, which were the work of poor Josephine's fingers.

"Half-past six," said Mrs. Dalby, pausing before the elegant clock, which was ticking on the mantelpiece. "It will be an hour and a half before the guests arrive. We shall have plenty of time to arrange everything. I am sure I hope Captain Chatteris won't come to-night."

"Why, mamma?" asked Diana.

"After his engagement—his absurd engagement," answered Mrs. Dalby. "And they say that creature is so jealous—that humpbacked heiress; she would lead him such a life if she knew he had been here, and very probably she would speak against you."

Diana tossed her beautiful head and laughed.

"You make very light of it," said her mother, reproachfully. "For my part, I won't conceal that I am terribly annoyed at it. I wonder the loss of twenty thousand a-year does not impress you a little more seriously. Merton Court and the title and the great Romilly diamonds—I really can't bear to think of it!"

"But do you suppose that if they had not fallen to the lot of the heiress," said Diana, "that they would have become my property? What would my lord and my lady and the proud sisters Chatteris have said if their beloved brother had married a country doctor's little daughter, with just two hundred a-year in the funds? They would all have turned their backs upon me—they would have turned up their noses at me; they would have called me a scheming, shameless adventuress, and a number of other hard names."

"But you could have held your own," rejoined

Mrs. Dalby, looking at her daughter, who wore a rich white silk dress, embroidered with rosebuds, an overskirt of white lace, a low bodice, and a brilliant set of pink topazes, heavily mounted in the richest gold—there were pink topazes flashing among the coils of her abundant dark hair. Her eyes sparkled yet more brightly, the bloom on her cheek, softening off into the most delicate brunette-tinting, had all the down and loveliness of an autumn peach. "You would have held your own," said Mrs. Dalby, looking at her beautiful daughter. "You would have been the handsomest woman in London, and when you became Lady Romilly princess would have been at your feet!"

"I don't want any princes about my feet," rejoined Diana, lightly, and she put forth her white satin boot as she spoke, which showed off the perfection of her ankle and foot. "I should think it must be very uncomfortable," and Diana laughed again.

"You did not improve your opportunities, Diana," cried Mrs. Dalby, angrily.

At this moment there came a loud ring at the front door bell, followed by a thundering knock.

"Who can that be?" cried Diana.

The two ladies held their breath while the servant opened the door. They heard a gentleman's voice, and the moment after Captain Chatteris rushed without ceremony into the room.

Mrs. Dalby was at once highly dignified, the young officer could not but have laughed in his sleeve at the great change which had come over the doctor's lady, but Diana went forward to meet him, smiling and radiant as of yore.

"How good of you to come and see the effect of the room!" she cried. "Does it not look charming? All these flowers are the work of your young protégée—the pretty girl with the French name."

"A dangerous protégée for a young man," cried Mrs. Dalby, severely, "and under present circumstances I should say that the less Captain Chatteris concerns himself with such people the better."

The cheek of Chatteris flushed hot and his eyes flashed indignant fire. So this was the beginning of the change which he was to feel on account of his engagement to Miss Woodville? Even such people as the Dalbys, whom he had hitherto condescended to visit because they gave such pleasant parties, and Diana was so pretty—even such people as the Dalbys might scorn and scoff at him, and snub him if they chose, because they knew he was marrying the ugly heiress for money, and because their own chance of ever winning him was gone! Diana was above such meanness, but Mrs. Dalby seemed to revel in the power of inflicting annoyance. Chatteris began to regret that he had come.

"I see you have heard the news, Mrs. Dalby," said he. "But what news is there that the good folks of Northwick St. John's do not hear within six hours after the event has transpired? I wonder they have not put out placards all over the town announcing my engagement with Miss Woodville of Stoneleigh Priory! But really this surveillance is rather unpleasant. I shall be glad when they order my regiment off. Instead of our going to India they are going to send us actually to London, and there we shall remain until June."

"But you will be leaving your lady-love," cried Mrs. Dalby, sharply.

"I? not at all," cried the captain, quickly. "The fates are kind enough to provide that I shall not be left to pine away my weary heart in London, far from her whom you call my lady-love. Miss Woodville will go to the town mansion during all the time that our regiment is quartered in London."

"How nice!" said Diana, sarcastically.

He hardly expected that little stab from good-natured Diana, and he looked at her somewhat reproachfully, then, recovering himself, he said:

"Yes, it will be very delightful. It is always charming to find oneself in the presence of those who are dear to us."

Diana's large eyes widened in surprise. Could it be possible that the captain could really like Elfrida Woodville, or did she recall to him simply the anticipation of one day enjoying her vast wealth, and was he grateful to her? The beautiful lip of Diana curled in bitter scorn at the thought. She could not have believed the captain so mean.

"I am sure we ought to think ourselves highly honoured," she said, "that you have not forgotten your engagement for our poor little party to-night."

"I have thought of it incessantly, Miss Dalby," rejoined the captain, with a moody smile. "I anticipate so much pleasure from it. I shall not be able, for the future, I suppose, to join these little delightful gatherings; my time will be otherwise occupied in dancing attendance upon my fiancée. You know I made this appointment before I had the happiness of being engaged to Miss Woodville, and she kindly permits me to keep those engagements which I made before I was bound by her golden fetters."

"The golden fetters of her love," scoffed Diana.

The captain bowed, apparently in acquiescence.

"I have come a great deal too early," continued Chatteris, smiling, and glancing down at his dancing boots, for he was perfectly and gracefully dressed for the ball; "but I thought you would give an old friend the benefit of an hour's chat with you, and that perhaps you would give me a cup of tea."

"Have you not dined, Captain Chatteris?" inquired Diana, eagerly.

"No, I have not dined," he rejoined. "I lunched at one o'clock at Stoneleigh Priory, and the lunches there are of so rich and varied a description that a dinner afterwards is only superfluous, and therefore I have not dined. I dressed and came here in a cab, and now an hour's chat and a cup of tea will make me so lively, put me into such tearing spirits, prepare me so delightfully for all the fun and frolic and fashion and folly that are to follow, and that go to make up the sum of a ball."

Diana and her mother stared at each other in amazement.

Was the captain losing his senses? Was he perfectly and entirely sober? His dignity and his calm cheerfulness were all gone. His brown cheek flushed and his brown eyes flashed. With his clearly-cut features, noble bearing, grand-looking head, and martial mien, he was as splendid a type of an Englishman as could have been found in the three kingdoms. But there was a wildness, a look of unrest, a certain indescribable something which made one feel inclined to pity and to wonder while gazing on him and listening to his strange talk.

The Dalbys, mother and daughter, were not long in finding out how matters stood. Women are proverbially quick-witted in these affairs. Chatteris spoke not a word against the malicious humbug to whom he was affianced, and yet he had not been half an hour longer with Diana before she understood the whole case as completely as if he had taken the pains to explain it to her. She did not know, to be sure, that Lord Romilly had speculated, that the secretary of the company had gone off, leaving my lord liable for three hundred thousand pounds; but she divined in some way or other the great family was in trouble and embarrassment, and that for the sake of his relations Chatteris was to be sold to a deformed woman, whose malignity was the talk of the neighbourhood. She pitied him then, and extended towards him a large share of her womanly sympathy.

Not so Mrs. Dalby. That lady was far too practical to waste sympathy where there was no advantage to be reaped. Captain Chatteris engaged or married to Miss Woodville would no longer possess any interest for her. She knew that the heiress would be far too haughty ever to associate with the family of a mere country doctor. No social advantage then could be gained, for to be intimate with the husband, while the wife ignored their existence, would not raise the Dalbys in the opinion of society.

Very cold, reserved, haughty—nay, even disagreeable was madam then during all the time that they were sipping tea in the dining-room, but Diana chatted volubly and Chatteris forgot the existence of the ill-tempered mistress of the house.

Presently a ring came to the front-door bell. The servant opened the door. A timid voice was heard in the passage, and then came the sound of the opening and shutting of the door of the ball-room.

"It's that girl, I suppose," said Mrs. Dalby, shortly. "Miss Beauvilliers," explained Diana, looking at the captain.

She could not but notice how the flush died away from his brown cheek, and what a strange look came into his dark eyes.

Diana, warm hearted and lively, was still a girl of the world, shrewd and ambitious. She jumped therefore at once to conclusions which were not very flattering either to Chatteris or the beautiful flower-maker, and yet she did not feel uncharitably disposed towards either of them.

"Ah!" thought she to herself, "this gallant officer has been making love to this pretty little pauper—for really I should think the Beauvilliers are as poor as paupers. I remember how he followed her out the other night when she came here with the flowers, and now he wonders what she will say to him, for of course she has heard of his engagement. By the way, too, my maid told me that he had sent down several tongues and bottles of wine and other things to poor Beauvilliers, who is a great invalid. Of course he has made love to her. Well, it will teach her not to put her faith in mankind, especially military mankind. As for him, it serves him right that he should find himself in such close proximity with the pretty little flower-maker, whom he has taken such pains to deceive. I will astonish him."

Then looking again at the captain with a species of pretty malice Diana said:

"We have been disappointed about the band for our ball to-night. It is engaged for a grand affair at the Dénigys at Mostyn Hall. Of course, such little people as a country doctor's family have to give way when such great county folks as you and the Dénigys and the Woodvilles announce a merry-making. So Miss Beauvilliers is going to play the piano for us to dance. I assure you she is a very gifted performer."

Diana watched Chatteris as she spoke, and she saw

the flush mount again to his cheek, and the light come into his eye. Then it all faded, colour and light and excited expression. There remained only a pale, hard, set face.

"Dear me," thought Diana, "this must be more serious than I fancied. I am afraid there must be something wrong."

Diana, however, did not choose that Captain Chatteris should suppose she had read his secret. She chatted on therefore upon indifferent subjects.

Meanwhile Josephine in the ball-room had taken off her cloak and bonnet, hung them up in the little ante-room, and now was standing by the piano awaiting the entrance of Miss Dalby or the doctor's lady. Josephine's fair beauty was contrasted by a new dress, of a dark blue colour. It was cheap in material, but perfectly made. She wore a lace collar and cuffs; the collar was fastened by that heavy gold brooch which was the sole relic of her father's days of wealth. Her auburn hair was beautifully arranged. Pale and pensive and sad, and totally unconscious of her own beauty, she leaned upon the piano, thinking painful thoughts. She knew that Chatteris was engaged to Miss Woodville. She remembered his promise to search for the certificate of her grandmother's marriage, and she believed it would be impossible now for him to redeem that promise, since he would have to be acting against the interests of his future wife.

But Josephine's romantic heart was not so distressed in regard to the certificate. There was another and a sharper pain which destroyed all her young dream, and showed her life in its ugly, bare reality. She had been very foolish, she told herself, ever to have imagined that Captain Chatteris had regarded her otherwise than as a little humble flower-maker, scarcely raised above a peasant or artisan. She was only seventeen and a half, but she told herself that it was quite time she had done with illusions—henceforth hard, practical work; if paid, must be her lot. She must look for no pleasures. She had got tired of her rovels when a servant entered, bearing a cup of tea on a tray with two or three slices of bread and butter.

"Miss Dalby has sent you in your tea, miss," observed the servant, jauntily.

She was a smartly dressed, talkative maid of somewhat familiar manners, but good-natured and well-disposed in the main.

"The corner of the grand piano makes quite a table, don't it, miss?" she said. "You see all the tables have been moved out for the folks as is coming to dance. This is the drawing-room by rights, you know, only the things are all took out. La! how beautiful you do make them flowers, to be sure," and she looked up at the walls and the ceiling. "I am sure they ought to pay you a long price for them. And to-night you are going to play the piano; I am sure they ought to give you a good price for that."

Poor Josephine was to receive a guinea for the night's performance, a sum which would purchase many little comforts for the inhabitants of the white cottage. She sipped her tea, however, without gratifying the curiosity of the housemaid, although she smiled and answered her pleasantly.

"Captain Chatteris is here," said the young girl, nodding. "What a nice gentleman he is to be sure! Missis did think he was making up to Miss Di, but all that's over now. You know, don't you, miss, that he is engaged to Miss Woodville of Stoneleigh Priory? Ain't she just ugly? And she's that spiteful that if a person offends her she'd as soon kill 'em as look at 'em. They say she was changed at nurse by the fairies. Lady Woodville's baby was carried off, and an imp of darkness put in its place, and she looks like it, don't she? Forehead no higher than my nail, and black eyebrows as thick as ropes, and squints enough to frighten you, and humpbacked, and—"

Jane had proceeded thus far with her string of uncomplimentary epithets when Captain Chatteris walked briskly into the room.

"Miss Beauvilliers will take another cup of tea," said he, passing the empty cup in a peremptory fashion to Jane.

The strange brusqueness of his manner astonished Josephine, and Jane had no other choice than to take the cup and leave the room hastily.

Then Chatteris seized the hand of Josephine and pressed it between his own. A strange fire burnt in his eyes. All the love which he had felt so long, but never expressed, made itself manifest to Josephine without the utterance of a single word; he only held her hand, and looked at her steadfastly while she sat before the little tea-tray, and yet Josephine comprehended how much she was loved. She might have doubted it before, but she could never doubt it again with that burning look photographed indelibly upon her brain.

"Josephine," whispered Chatteris, "I am fearfully

unfortunate, and you must never think of me except as a friend who would willingly serve you with his life. In any future trouble, hesitate not to apply to me; if you want money, if you want help—"

At this moment Chatteris was interrupted by the re-entrance of Jane with a second cup of tea.

Chatteris walked over to a pile of music, and began turning some of it over. Jane's suspicions, if she had any, were at once put to rest.

Presently Diana came in. She advanced lightly towards Chatteris.

"All that is old music," she said, carelessly: "torn leaves and half-sheets of Beethoven and Mozart. I daresay Miss Beauvilliers could do better justice to those old masters than I can. I am such a rattle-brained performer."

Thus Diana chatted on. She was determined not to give Chatteris much opportunity of flirting with Josephine. This was on principle, and not from any petty jealous feeling; although Diana might have felt something like disappointment at the loss of Merton Court and the title. She chatted on then. Now and anon her splendid eyes seemed to sweep as it were half-disdainfully over the graceful form of Josephine, who now sat aside, engaged in some tatting work which she had brought in her pocket, her head bent in a meek and lowly fashion. She glanced sharply at Chatteris too, and she saw how absent and distracted his manner was, how full of false excitement. And then the knocker began to fly against the hall door, and the sound of wheels was heard in the street, and visitors began to pour in.

First of all they were conducted to the cloak-room, then the ball-room door was opened, and the man in livery announced Mrs. Freeder and the Misses Freeder, Mr. and Mrs. Strong, Mrs. Lillydale, and the three Misses Lillydale. Then came a batch of the captain's brother-officers. The knocker continued to rattle, the wheels continued to roll, ladies in pink and blue and yellow continued to be announced. Gentlemen in white ties, some very young and unfledged and awkward; others graceful, dashing, and so self-possessed as to be almost insolent in their bearing; others gray and spectacled and stout and extra polite flocked in little crowds. At last the room was full, crammed full.

We are only describing a country doctor's ball, in a country town, where there were no great suites of apartments, each devoted to a different species of amusement. There was only the ball-room, which was the drawing-room, with the carpet taken up and the walls decorated. In this room the visitors partook of tea and coffee, and delicate cakes and confections, carried about by two men-servants in livery.

Diana was surrounded by a perfect crowd of admirers; several of the unfledged youths, who were mostly tall, thin, with flushed cheeks, and very light hair, fluttered about her like insects about a flower parterre.

There was a great hum of voices—some smothered laughter—a few young ladies, with perplexed and anxious faces, who were speculating in their own minds as to the chance of obtaining partners. And then, when everybody had eaten enough cake and drunk enough tea, and the footman carried away the cups, Captain Chatteris suddenly presented himself to Josephine, offered her his arm, and conducted her to the piano. Then there was an increased hum of voices, for the gentlemen were choosing their partners, and the ladies were blushing behind their fans. There was a programme before Josephine. The first dance was to be a quadrille, and she struck up the air with a light and brilliant touch. The ball-room was tolerably large, and soon five-sets of quadrilles were progressing simultaneously with spirit. It is true there was not very much space for the showing off of fine steps, but everybody appeared contented and in good temper, and Josephine played on. Chatteris, meanwhile, was close at her side, and whispering into her ear:

"Josephine, I am going to be married; but none the less diligently shall I search for the certificate of your grandmother's marriage; and, though it impoverishes my wife and myself, you shall yet be the possessor of Stoneleigh Priory if it rests with me to make you so."

For a moment the colour deepened on the cheek of Josephine; then it faded away to a deathly paleness. She looked at Chatteris and she said:

"Captain Chatteris, do not whisper to me, do not look at me like that."

And he answered in desperate and reckless fashion, speaking in a low, hoarse whisper:

"Josephine, I love you—I love you—I love you—my love to you has maddened me. I am bound to marry another woman to save my family from ruin, and so I have become a dishonourable villain, pledging my hand while my heart turns sick at the bare thought of my future wife. I should go mad if I



did not tell you this. I know that you must hate, despise, and loathe me."

"No, no," murmured poor, agitated Josephine, and her fingers stumbled over the keys.

At this moment came such a loud knocking at the front door that it seemed to shake the whole house. It was a knocking that made the dancers pause, and the noise partly cover the confusion of Josephine.

"All the visitors are arrived," observed Mrs. Dalby, in a whisper to the doctor, who had just entered the room.

Then the door was opened, and a high-pitched female voice was heard in the passage. As for the footmen at the door, they perceived a large carriage drawn by four horses and the lights shone upon servants in gorgeous livery. Meanwhile the owner of the sharp-pitched voice came forward, and announced herself. The ball-room door was thrown open, and the visitors held their breath at the strange announcement of "Lady Vengea Tempestcloud."

Thereupon entered a strange, tall woman, of spare habit. Her thick white hair was powdered and turned back in the style of Marie Antoinette. A band of the richest rubies fastened it. Her face was withered and wrinkled, but the features were fine, and the black eyes flashed with all the fire of youth. From the ears hung large diamonds; a necklace of the same was round the shrunken neck. Priceless bracelets flashed upon the attenuated arms. Lady Vengea Tempestcloud wore a dress of the richest violet Lyons velvet; her stomacher flashed with diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, that must have been worth a king's ransom. She bowed haughtily, like an old queen, to the assembled guests.

Mrs. Dalby stood before her in perfect amazement.

#### CHAPTER XV.

She was a hag of stony mien,  
With flashing eyes, whose wicked gleam  
Seemed lit with fire from Tophet deep;  
It was a face to banish sleep. *Macmillan Fox.*

"I HAVE come here uninvited," said the Lady Vengea, "and if you refuse me the privilege of remaining to see your very pretty ball I shall be extremely mortified, Mrs. Dalby."

The Lady Tempestcloud spoke with the air of a haughty old queen condescending to address her liege subjects.

Mrs. Dalby was flustered and agitated, at the same time she was quite cowed by the patronizing air of the magnificent old lady.

"I am sure I am only too pleased," she faltered forth.

"That is all right then," responded Lady Vengea, with a stately waving of her hand. "Perhaps they will order my carriage to call for me at twelve o'clock."

The order was executed at once, and Doctor Dalby then himself came forward, and offered his arm to conduct her ladyship to a seat.

Smiling and bowing, and still condescending, her ladyship crossed the room and established herself on a cushioned seat placed right under a species of triumphal arch, formed of laurel bushes and artificial flowers, which ornamented a recess of the ball-room. And then a murmur of inquiry, a buzz of surprise seemed to agitate the guests as the summer wind agitates the leaves of a forest.

"Who is she? What is she? Tempestcloud, Tempestcloud. Is there such a name in the Peerage? Surely not."

And then one old gentleman in blue spectacles, learned in such matters, was able to recollect for the edification of an inquisitive old lady, with meeting eyebrows, projecting false teeth, a masculine voice, and a gorgeous headress, "That there was such a name as Tempestcloud in the English Peerage. The title," said he, "was Howthhurst, but it became extinct when the last baron died at a very ripe old age, some twenty years since. This must be his sister, much younger than himself, although now she must be pretty far on the shady side of sixty. Lady Vengea married a Russian nobleman, and has lived abroad for a long time. Her real title would be the Countess Potowski. She was always an eccentric personage, and now that she has returned to England she has assumed the title of the days of her youth. Very remarkable what she can be doing in Northwick St. John's, but she travels about, I suppose, and comes peering and prying into every odd nook in the kingdom. It certainly is very strange."

The old lady with the gorgeous headress, the false front teeth and the masculine voice was the widow of a colonel in the army. She set up for great worldly wisdom, excessive gentility, and enjoyed the reputation of having been in her young days connected with nearly all the aristocrats in the kingdom. Mrs. Colonel Tightly, for that was her name, requested the blue-spectacled gentleman to give her his arm and conduct her through the difficulties and intricacies of the way—for about forty persons were

dancing with great vigour at the time—to that flowery arch under which was seated my Lady Vengea Tempestcloud.

After a great deal of piloting and several rude buffets from the elbows and shoulders of preoccupied dancers, Mrs. Colonel Tightly and her spectacled friend arrived safely in harbour, that is to say, arrived at the cushioned seat whereon was enthroned the uninvited and bejewelled guest. There was room enough for Mrs. Colonel Tightly, but not room enough for the spectacled gentleman. He was therefore compelled to stand, but Mrs. Colonel Tightly established herself in close proximity to Lady Tempestcloud.

"Lady Vengea Tempestcloud," said Mrs. Tightly, in her masculine voice, and she bowed and smiled.

Lady Tempestcloud neither bowed nor smiled, but held up her haughty head, and, looking with her flashing eyes right into the face of the colonel's widow, she remarked:

"Mrs. Colonel Tightly, I believe?"

Mrs. Tightly smiled and bowed again.

"My husband was in the —th regiment of foot," said Mrs. Tightly.

"Indeed," responded Lady Vengea, most ungraciously.

Mrs. Tightly was not daunted, she was too old a soldier for that.

"I was acquainted with all the Marquis of Douro's family, most intimately," said Mrs. Tightly.

"I hope you liked them, ma'am," responded Lady Vengea, grimly.

Mrs. Colonel Tightly was a little abashed for an instant, but instantly recovering herself she exclaimed:

"Charming, charming. They were my most intimate and dearest friends. Were you acquainted with them, Lady Vengea?"

"I knew more of them than I wished to," was the short and unconvincing answer. "The old marchioness used to take snuff and the young marquis used to get tipsy."

"But the young marchioness," cried Mrs. Tightly. "She was delightful, and her children were perfect angels."

"It is a pity they did not spread their wings and fly away," responded Lady Vengea. "I remember them at Brussels twenty years ago. The most mischievous young monkeys in existence. They played at battle and sieges in their suite of nurseries, and when they supposed they had taken a town they set fire to it. Not only did they burn all their dolls, but also a four-post bedstead hung with velvet curtains, and a large ebony chest of drawers. It was with great difficulty their lives were saved."

Mrs. Colonel Tightly laughed.

"Clever little creatures they must have been," she said.

"But, Lady Vengea, when we were quartered in Dublin we were acquainted most intimately with the family of the Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Marston, and we used to meet the Duke of Grattan there constantly. Ah! those were delightful times. Have you been in Dublin, Lady Vengea?"

"I have been everywhere, madam," responded Lady Vengea, "and the more I go about, and the more I see of my fellow creatures the more I learn to dislike them."

"Oh, Lady Vengea, I see that you are something of a wag," cried Mrs. Colonel Tightly, laughing and nodding her head. "I hope if you are going to make any stay in Northwick St. John's that you will come and dine with me. Mrs. Colonel Tightly, Donham Villa, York Road, Northwick St. John's."

"What will you give me for dinner, madam?" demanded Lady Vengea, sharply.

Mrs. Colonel Tightly rocked herself backwards and forwards in convulsive throes of laughter.

"Delightful, delightful," she cried. "This is indeed a pleasure to meet with so original and charming a character. My dear Lady Vengea, you have but to command. Pray tell me what you like, in order that I may procure it for you."

"I like everything of the best," responded her ladyship. "I like turtle soup and game pies. I like the finest fish, prize poultry, and pastry from the first London houses. I never drink any wine but the most expensive, and I am very fastidious in the matter of fruit."

Poor Mrs. Colonel Tightly looked aghast. Her income was small, and such a feast as the exacting Lady Vengea had described would have cost more than half of her quarterly allowance.

Lady Vengea smiled a cruel smile and nodded her gray head with its band of flashing rubies at the other old lady.

"You see I am not a very easy person to deal with, madam," she said. "I don't care anything about dukes or marquises or earls, and if you would allow me to give you a small bit of advice, here it is: Don't trouble yourself about them either, depend upon it, they have never cared anything for you since you be-

came an old woman and had to live on half-pay in a country town, and I should advise you to have a good dinner every day yourself, and let your servants have one also, instead of getting talked about in the town for your meanness, and giving a grand dinner once in three months, which you can't afford."

The outrageous speeches of the insolent Lady Vengea became more than even the colonel's widow could endure. She was almost inclined to sob with sheer mortification. She rose to her feet.

"Good evening, madam," she said. "I should—I should think you must be insane, madam, to speak as you have spoken. Your conduct is not the conduct of a lady."

"I have spoken the truth," replied Lady Vengea, with a grim smile. "People always hate me because I tell them the truth, and I would rather have their hatred than their love."

Here the unladylike lady broke into a strange cackling laugh.

The spectacled gentleman offered his arm to poor Mrs. Colonel Tightly and conducted her forthwith to another seat.

Refreshments were now handed about among the guests.

Josephine left off playing, and Chatteris brought her a glass of wine and a sandwich. He had danced two or three dances mechanically and without spirit, and now he was at the side of Josephine again.

"You look fatigued," he said; "I will tell them all they must wait, they must not dance again. Yet—oh, Josephine, do not turn away from me in that manner!"

"She is quite right," said a sharp voice at his elbow, "and you have no right to be making love to her, while you are engaged to your hunchback with her diamonds and her coffers full of gold. And your hunchback is quite good enough for you. Don't you go and fancy that because you have well-chiselled features and a smooth brown complexion, and because you are a fine upright figure, and because you can write and fight and shoot and ride and dance and skate, and what they call shine in society—don't you fancy that you are throwing yourself away, and that you are anybody's superior; because you are not. You are an idle fellow who has wasted his opportunities and thrown away his chances. You might have made a name in literature if you had chosen, and your books might have been worth three thousand pounds a piece. So that if Morton Court had been sold, you might still have earned a splendid income, enough to keep your proud relations in comfort and elegance, if not in splendour and luxury. Splendour and luxury are no good for anybody. They only weaken the character, harden the heart, and enervate the intellect. You have been idle, and now you have sold yourself; and you are sold, and it is good enough for you, and all you have to do is, to keep clear of this girl, who is making a fool of herself. She must be separated from you at once. I'd send her to a reformatory, if I had my way."

"Madam!" cried Chatteris, "how dare you—how dare you speak in such terms of Miss Beauvilliers?"

"Because I always dare to speak the truth," responded Lady Vengea, grimly. "I don't mean to say that this pretty one has done anything worse than sigh and smile and blush in your presence; and at home she has sighed and grown thin and wept many tears and dreamt many dreams. If it goes on now, we shall have her dead, or mad, or something else equally dreadful. I have made up my mind therefore that it shall not go on. I shall call on Mr. Beauvilliers to-morrow, and lay the whole case before him."

"Madam, you have no right to interfere, how dare you?" cried Chatteris, passionately. "If you think that because you are a Lady Vengea you have a right to insult, you are vastly mistaken. I care not for your title, your wealth, or your insolence."

"And I—I care nothing for your youth, your strength, or your impudence," responded Lady Vengea. "I am going to take the law into my own hands. I am going to advise your hunchback to look sharply after you, and above all things I am going to remove this girl entirely from your path."

The young captain was absolutely boiling with rage.

"Madam, madam," he said, "you presume upon the privilege of your sex when you insult me thus; but pray, lay no claim to the manner or feeling of a gentleman."

Old Lady Vengea seemed to elevate her nose in the air. She drew up her shrunken neck, and cast a sneering look at Chatteris.

"I care nothing about gentlemen, their manners, or their feelings," she said. "I think of things far more exalted."

And then she swept back again to her seat which she had quitted, and addressed herself next to Diana Dolby, who advanced smilingly to beg her to partake of some refreshment.

"Thank you," responded Lady Vengea. "I have lived long enough to know some of the rules of health, and I do not choose to injure my digestive organs by gourmandizing between meals, as all of your friends seem to be doing. Take care not to spoil your brilliant complexion by the like malpractice. I might add a word of advice, which should be, that you should allow the dictates of love, rather than those of ambition, in the choice of a husband."

"Your ladyship is very kind to give us so much advice gratis," retorted Diana, merrily.

"You have a saucy tongue," responded Lady Vengea; "but I believe you have a warm heart, although you don't know yourself whether you have a heart or not."

"I should be puzzled how to live without one, your ladyship," replied Diana; "but I assure you that after the last waltz I felt it beating very fast indeed. I am quite positive that I have a heart."

"You know well I did not speak of the physical heart, Miss Malapert," responded Lady Vengea.

"I am a very literal, practical person, your ladyship," replied Diana.

"You mean to say that you are cold and selfish—very well, perhaps you are—I do not say that you are not," and with a wave of her hand Lady Vengea intimated that Diana was free to go about her business and that the interview was ended.

Diana went away serene and smiling. The ball proceeded gaily.

(To be continued.)

### THE HANGING OF THE CRANE.\*

BY HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

I.  
THE lights are out, and gone are all the guests  
That thronging came with merriment and jests  
To celebrate the Hanging of the Crane  
In the new house,—into the night are gone;  
But still the fire upon the hearth burns on,  
And I alone remain.

Oh, fortunate, oh, happy day,  
When a new household finds its place  
Among the myriad homes of earth,  
Like a new star just sprung to birth  
And rolled on its harmonious way  
Into the boundless realms of space!  
So said the guests in speech and song,  
As in the chimney, burning bright,  
We hung the iron crane to-night,  
And merry was the feast and long.

II.  
And now I sit and muse on what may be,  
And in my vision see, or seem to see,  
Through floating vapours interlused with light,  
Shapes indeterminate, that gleam and fade,  
As shadows passing into deeper shade  
Sink and elude the sight.

For two alone, there in the hall,  
Is spread the table round and small;  
Upon the polished silver shine  
The evening lamps, but more divine  
The light of love shines over all;  
Of love that says not mine and thine,  
But ours, for ours is thine and mine.  
They want no guests to come between  
Their tender glances like a screen,  
And tell them tales of land and sea,  
And whatsoever may betide  
The great forgotten world outside;  
They want no guests; they needs must be  
Each other's own best company.

III.  
The picture fades; as at a village fair  
A showman's views dissolve into the air,  
To reappear transfigured on the screen,  
So in my fancy this; and now once more  
In part transfigured, through the open door  
Appears the self-same scene.

Seated I see the two again,  
But not alone; they entertain  
A little angel unawares,  
With face as round as is the moon;  
A royal guest with flaxen hair,  
Who, throned upon his lofty chair,  
Drums on the table with his spoon,  
Then drops it careless on the floor,  
To grasp at things unseen before,  
Are these celestial manners? These  
The ways that win the arts that please?  
Ah, yes; consider well the guest,  
And whatso'er he does seems best,  
He saith by the right divine  
Of helplessness, so lately born  
In purple chambers of the morn,  
As sovereign o'er thee and thine.  
He speaketh not, and yet there lies  
A conversation in his eyes;

The golden silence of the Greek,  
The gravest wisdom of the wise,  
Not spoken in language, but in looks  
More legible than printed books,  
As if he could but would not speak.

And now, oh, monarch absolute,  
Thy power is put to proof; for lo!  
Resistless, fathomless and slow,  
The nurse comes rustling like the sea,  
And pushes back thy chair and thee,  
And so good night to King Canute.

IV.  
As one who walking in a forest sees  
A lovely landscape through the parted trees,  
Then sees it not for boughs that intervene,  
Or as we see the moon sometimes revealed  
Through drifting clouds, and then again con-  
cealed,

So I beheld the scene.

There are two guests at table now;  
The king, deposed, and older grown,  
No longer occupies the throne—  
The crown is on his sister's brow;  
A Princess from the Fairy Tales,  
The very pattern girl of girls,  
All-covered and embowered in curls,  
Rose-tinted from the Isle of Flowers,  
And sailing with soft silken sails  
From far-off Dreamland into ours.  
Above their bowls with rims of blue  
Four azure eyes of deeper hue  
Are looking, dreamy with delight;  
Limpid as planets, that emerge  
Above the ocean's rounded verge,  
Soft shining through the summer night.  
Steadfast they gaze, yet nothing see  
Beyond the horizon of their bowls;  
Nor care they for the world that rolls  
With all its freight of troubled souls  
Into the days that are to be.

V.  
Again the tossing boughs shut out the scene,  
Again the drifting vapours intervene,  
And the moon's pallid disk is hidden quite;  
And now I see the table wider grown,  
As round a pebble into water thrown  
Dilates a ring of light.

I see the table wider grown,  
I see it garlanded with guests,  
As if fair Ariadne's Crown  
Out of the sky had fallen down;  
Maidens within whose tender breasts  
A thousand restless hopes and fears,  
Forth reaching to the coming years,  
Flutter awhile, then quiet lie,  
Like timid birds that fain would fly,  
But do not dare to leave their nests;  
And youths, who in their strength elate  
Challenge the van and front of fate,  
Eager as champions to be  
In the divine knight-errantry  
Of youth, that travels sea and land  
Seeking adventures, or pursues  
Through cities and through solitudes  
Frequented by the lyric muse,  
The phantom with the beckoning hand,  
That still allures and still eludes.  
Oh, sweet illusions of the brain!  
Oh, sudden thrills of fire and frost!  
The world is bright while ye remain,  
And dark and dead when ye are lost!

VI.  
The meadow-brook, that seemeth to stand still  
Quickens its current as it nears the mill;  
And so the stream of Time that hithereth  
In level places, and so dull appears,  
Runs with a swifter current as it nears  
The gloomy mills of Death.

And now, like the magician's scroll,  
That in the owner's keeping shrinks  
With every wish he speaks or thinks,  
Till the last wish consumes the whole,  
The table dwindles, and again  
I see the two alone remain.  
The crown of stars is broken in parts;  
Its jewels, brighter than the day,  
Have one by one been stolen away  
To shine in other homes and hearts.  
One is a wanderer now afar  
In Ceylon or in Zanzibar,  
Or sunny regions in Cathay;  
And one is in the boisterous camp,  
'Mid clink of arms and horse's tramp,  
And battle's terrible array.

I see the patient mother read,  
With aching heart, of wrecks that float  
Disabled on those seas remote,  
Or of some great heroic deed

On battle-fields, where thousands bleed  
To lift one hero into fame.  
Anxious she bends her graceful head  
Above those chronicles of pain,  
And trembles with a secret dread,  
Lest there among the drowned or slain  
She find the one beloved name.

VII.  
After a day of cloud and wind and rain  
Sometimes the setting sun breaks out again,  
And touching all the darksome woods with  
light,  
Smiles on the fields until they laugh and sing,  
Then like a ruby from the horizon's ring  
Drops down into the night.

What see I now? The night is fair,  
The storm of grief, the clouds of care,  
The wind, the rain, have passed away;  
The lamps are lit, the fires burn bright,  
The house is full of life and light—  
It is the Golden Wedding-day.  
The guests come thronging in once more,  
Quick footsteps sound along the floor,  
The trooping children crowd the stair,  
And in and out and everywhere  
Flashes along the corridor  
The sunshine of their golden hair.

On the round table in the hall  
Another Ariadne's Crown  
Out of the sky hath fallen down;  
More than one Monarch of the Moon  
Is drumming with his silver spoon;  
The light of love shines over all.  
Oh, fortunate, oh, happy day!  
The people sing, the people say.  
The ancient bridegroom and the bride,  
Serenely smiling on the scene,  
Behold well-pleased on every side  
Their forms and features multiplied,  
As the reflection of a light  
Between two burnished mirrors gleams,  
Or lamps upon a bridge at night  
Stretch on and on before the sight,  
Till the long vista endless seems.

\* *Pendre la crémillère*, to hang the crane, is the French expression for a house-warming, or the first party given in a new house.

THERE is now living at Lower Hale Cottages, near Margate, Mrs. Mary Brookman, née King, who was born on the 30th of September, 1772, and baptized on the 4th of the following month. Her eldest son, Thomas Brookman, who has recently celebrated his 80th year, is also still living.

THE newest earrings in Paris are of bone. They are cut in the form of many-pointed stars tipped with different colours. A small star fastens in the lobe of the ear, and a larger one hangs underneath. They are very odd and very pretty. The first made were exhibited at the Vienna Exposition.

THE ASHANTEE WAR MEDAL.—The Ashantee war medal is very properly to be awarded to all those who were on the Gold Coast during the progress of the war, whether or not they were engaged before the enemy. The decision is to be commended, seeing that it will prevent much heartburning among those who left England in the hope of taking the field, but who, either from ill-health, the want of transport, or other causes, were unable to do so.

Two Russian guns, trophies of the Crimean war, have been received at the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, having been returned from Colchester, where they stood for about 17 years. Several other trophies of a similar character have been given up by other towns, and are on their way to Woolwich, where they will be broken up. There are very few Russian guns to be seen in the Royal Arsenal, and these are, generally speaking, only such as are remarkable for some peculiarity—one, for instance, having a cannon ball from a British gun lodged in the muzzle and jammed fast.

SOME Roman ladies have presented to the king, together with an address, one of the largest bouquets of flowers ever seen. It was chiefly composed of camellias of different colours, and the vase containing it was woven round with an infinite number of violets of different sorts. On the base was the inscription, elegantly designed with mosaic flowers, "To His Majesty the King of Italy, some Roman ladies, 23rd March, 1874." This magnificent nosegay stood upon a groundwork of ivy, and as it was being carried across the Piazza di Spagna, on its way up to the Quirinal, it looked like a flowery mountain, and attracted universal admiration.

PICTURE FRAMES.—It is not everybody who has taste in choosing picture-frames. To many, therefore, a few simple rules for framing chromos will be acceptable. As a general rule, the predominant colours in a picture should be taken as a guide. Black walnut frames, or brown panels, will be suit-



able for bright pictures, while dark pictures, and especially those in which brown predominates, should always be framed in gold. When unable to decide between the two, take a gold frame by all means, as gold will agree with every picture. Black walnut, especially when enriched by delicate engraved and gilt lines, is likewise very beautiful. The width of the frame should also be determined by the character of the picture. The stronger the picture the wider the frame should be. Width of frame adds to the importance and dignity of the picture. The style of wall-paper should, in some degree, influence the selection of a frame. When the paper is figured, the frame should be wide, in order to separate the picture from the paper. The best background for pictures is a neutral gray or a dark maroon.

## THE BLENKARNE INHERITANCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Miss Arlington's Will," "The Ebony Casket,"  
"The Secret of Schwarzenburg," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER XIII.

AT Garden Reach the absence of General Vansittant had made little impression except it might be with Aimée, the Hindoo woman, who went wandering about her master's deserted apartments with the alternations of rage and triumph, despair and exultation that characterized her impetuous, undisciplined nature. The blood-stained towels and garments had not escaped her search. She pondered over them with a fierce intensity of thought which, however, failed to show her the true explanation. Finally she ordered her own palanquin, and declared her intention of following the master to Allahabad. There was no one there of sufficient authority to gainsay this determination, and accordingly one cool morning, just as the sun was rising, Aimée's palanquin appeared in the narrow avenue of the general's country seat, and Aimée herself descended from it with a little hesitancy, but yet with a gleam of triumphant satisfaction in her eyes.

"Where is the sahib general?" she asked of the Hindoo servant, who rose up from his mat by the entrance way as her light step crossed the stone flagging.

"His excellency is over beyond. He has just had his coffee and is enjoying his pipe."

Aimée followed the man's glance, and saw a familiar figure, in a well-known dressing-gown, reclining comfortably in a hammock, swung under a vine-hung arbour.

"And where is the valet, Adam?" she asked, hoping to hear that the latter was engaged at a distance, and she could have speech with the general undisturbed by his presence.

The dull fellow stared at her, and repeated:

"Adam, Adam—"

"Soul of stupidity, I mean the general's valet, Adam," retorted Aimée, impatiently.

"The sahib Adam. Oh, yes, he is not here. He has not been here since the sahib general came."

"Good! It is better than I could expect," muttered Aimée, and walked swiftly toward the arbour, assuming her softest look and meekest smile.

Light as was her step, the occupant of the hammock turned, and calmly puffing a cloud of silver-edged smoke all about him, he said, in the full soldier voice she knew so well:

"Halt there, Aimée! What brings you to Allahabad without my orders?"

"The soul of Aimée sickened for her master's voice. The desolation frenzied her. Let my master pardon his slave!"

And the woman knelt down and laid her face in the dust.

"It was foolishly done, woman. But get you into the house, and trouble me not with your presence until I call for it," answered he.

"But, my lord, my master," began Aimée, as she rose and came a step nearer the hammock.

"Peace," thundered the general. "Have I not said it? Do I give the same command twice?"

Aimée made a mute obeisance and turned, and with a lowering brow retreated to the house, going backward all the way. When she reached the threshold, however, she turned with a sullen, malignant glance, muttering:

"Ay, I will wait till you call me before I speak again, but I can watch and listen—ay, and act."

She hastened into the quarters she had occupied before on similar visits, and finding the native servant plied him with questions, growing more and more puzzled at the answers.

The sahib general—what had he done? Why, he had eaten and slept, and walked a little, and rode twice.

"But has he been alone?"

"All alone, except when he first came. The sahib doctor was with him then."

"And Adam?"

"Yes, maybe. I forget about Adam. I think he went away with the doctor, answered the servant, dubiously.

"It is strange!" muttered the puzzled Aimée; "none of them seem to know anything about Adam. I never knew the general to do without him so long."

And, aloud, she questioned farther:

"And the general does nothing but eat, and sleep, and ride, and is all alone, and yet drives poor Aimée away when she comes. That is strange."

"Ah! he talks with the pen like the monshee," replied the other, eagerly, glad to have something positive to tell. "He writes, and writes, and many letters has he sent away."

"Ah, yes," spoke Aimée, hastily, "now you have understanding, good Abjib. And where does the general sit when he writes?"

"In the little room out from his chamber. It is there I take his letters and papers that come down from Calicut."

"And it is there I must put the cooling drinks and the tempting basket of fruit," said Aimée, eagerly. "No one understands his tastes so well as I."

And she smiled broadly, showing the pearly row of even teeth beneath, as her hand crept under the folds of her dress and closed over the bunch of keys concealed there.

She went up at once, her way undisputed by the servants, who had known the privileged position she held in other days, and busied herself in putting the room in order, as it really needed.

Now and then she cast a sharp, quick glance out of the window which showed the arbour and the swinging hammock. Swiftly her supple fingers applied the keys till they had found one to fit the lock of the large drawer of the writing-table, as, of course, one would, for had she not taken the bunch of keys from the general's room in Calcutta, and did not the label fastened with them on the steel ring say "Allahabad"?

Aimée smiled again triumphantly. She held in her hands the opening of all the doors and locked places in the house. And while others slept could not Aimée wake and wander where she would?

"It is the secret I want," she murmured, fiercely; "the secret that will make Amri's path clear to walk in. Then Aimée will go, and even the sahib general's voice shall not call her back."

Now she opened the drawer and contented herself with glancing in, smiling darkly as she saw a letter lying nearly finished, and commencing "Dear Algeon."

"Amri will read it, and Amri must answer it. It is well I sent him one of the captain's letters. He has a cunning hand, he will copy it safely," mused she. "I was foolish not to have charged him to make sure work with this Algeon. If I could have gone with him. There were many ways, it must be so easy a thing to do on shipboard. Tush! just a push, a careless shove on a dark night, and none would ever know how it was done. I am only afraid Amri will be cowardly."

She glanced at the papers longingly, but resolutely closed the drawer, consoling herself with the thought:

"Not now. I can wait. I can wait patiently, but I shall read every line there."

She made good her word. That night, when all the rest of the household slumbered, and while the regular breathing of the sleeping occupant came to her ears from the master's chamber, Aimée sat three livelong hours, never so much as rustling a paper, over the general's desk, and sifted its contents thoroughly. She had learned more than she anticipated, for, lo! there in the blank book with the locked clasps was a diary, or rather a biography written day by day, but going back twenty years into a history that would evidently make all things clear as noonday for herself, but, best of all, for Amri.

He was writing it up—that, then, was the secret of his solitary retirement.

Aimée clapped her hands noiselessly. Let him write, and night by night she would come and read, and reading, copy and send away to Amri. What could be more satisfactory?

She stole away with an exulting heart, which, however, received a terrible blow the next day when papers and letters arrived from below. She heard something the messenger said about a great catastrophe, and hastened out to hear what it might be. But at almost the first sentence her blood seemed to chill with horror.

The steamer was wrecked—the steamer that had taken Amri away from Calcutta.

She clung to the doorway where she stood, and a fierce rage came over her, an insane passion as if wind and sea had conspired against her. It never occurred to her that others were stricken. Alone

she saw her beautiful Amri going down into the boiling surge. Her handsome boy, her idol, her one treasure, for whom she was planning and plotting. What was the value of the noble steamship, with the costly cargo and priceless freight of human souls, even though it had gone down to its ocean grave, in the eyes of this wild Hindoo woman? Nothing—nothing whatever, if only Amri was saved.

She heard, as in a dream, the general's husky voice demanding the papers, while her dizzy brain whirled and seethed, and her heart beat with a hard, fierce pain, for she knew when he read the names of the boat's company which had been picked up by the companion steamer and brought in again to Calcutta, that neither Algeon Vansittant's nor Amri's name was among the saved.

She got away somewhere, and lay in a numbed heap, paying no attention to what was going on about her, and caring for nothing, nothing in the world now, not even for the anxious suspense which she knew the general must also be suffering. So a week went on. How she lived, why she did not die, the unhappy mother inquired not. At the expiration of that time came joyful news. The missing boat's company had been taken off an island and carried to Bombay, and were already forwarded again upon their journey. Conspicuous among the names, of course, was that of General Vansittant's son, and the details of the great sufferings of the survivors were given in sufficiently extravagant terms, all owing, as was asserted, to the unprecedentedly barbarous conduct of one of the passengers, who stole away to a passing ship with the boat, leaving his companions to perish.

Roused from her great trance of horror, Aimée was once more keen and vigilant. She knew in a moment who was the passenger who had fled with the boat. She even exulted in this proof of Amri's earnestness.

"It would have been an excellent thing—a safe thing," she muttered, without a single compunctions thought for other men and women and children, who must have borne such heavy grief had not the infamous plan miscarried. "Amri did not count on the young man's escaping. It is well I arranged to write him. I must send a letter promptly to warn him to be prepared for him. I know he has managed to secure the belt and the papers. His leaving thus proves it to me. Well done, my Amri. I will ferret out the whole secret, and then I will follow you."

Once again she crept about the house with stealthy steps while others slept, and again she returned to her midnight labours, which were necessarily slow and tedious, for she had little practice of penmanship of late, and she set herself resolutely to copying the whole contents of the clasped book.

One night she found something startling; for she sprang up, her great black eyes all aflame with delicious joy, and ran out—out in the garden, and flung herself down, and fairly cried out with very excess of joy.

"Oh, wonderful—oh, dazzling fortune!" she repeated to herself again and again. "If I had only known, I would have gone with him. We would have waited for nothing else. My Amri should have had his palace by this time. But he has it! he has the wonderful belt with him! Oh, the matchless secret! I could fly on the wings of the wind to reach Amri and secure the safety of the belt! If he should lose it! Ah, evil powers, if Amri should lose it before I tell! But shall I dare tell him? Shall I dare trust the knowledge to a letter? Who knows what danger might come from it? No, no! I will only charge him not to lose it—to hold it safe till I come. Oh, wonderful, magic belt! It shall make a queen of Aimée, and her son a prince!"

Then, remembering that she had left the desk unlocked, she crept back in her stealthy fashion, and replaced everything as she found it, that the general's careful eye might find no signs of disturbance. While she was doing this she heard a quick movement from the other room, and then the low-muttered words of the disturbed sleeper. Shading her taper with her hand, Aimée crept out of the room, and then some sudden impulse came to her, and she went boldly into the general's room, stepping lightly over the servant, whose dark limbs were stretched before the threshold.

"My master," she spoke, softly, "you called. What will you have?"

No answer. Advancing still nearer to the bedside, Aimée cautiously flung the taper's glow upon the couch. A hand hanging over the side, the sleeve pushed up from the wrist, caught her attention. A long, narrow seam left its zig-zag red line across the wrist. Aimée stared at it in deep amazement, then hastily lowered her taper, and carefully scrutinized the sleeper's face. A tiger glow broke over her own and mingled with the wild amazement and incredulity there. The features, the contour, the general air, all were similar to that of the master she had so long served with conflicting sentiments of fear

"Thank you," responded Lady Vengea. "I have lived long enough to know some of the rules of health, and I do not choose to injure my digestive organs by gourmandizing between meals, as all of your friends seem to be doing. Take care not to spoil your brilliant complexion by the like malpractice. I might add a word of advice, which should be, that you should allow the dictates of love, rather than those of ambition, in the choice of a husband."

"Your ladyship is very kind to give us so much advice gratis," retorted Diana, merrily.

"You have a saucy tongue," responded Lady Vengea; "but I believe you have a warm heart, although you don't know yourself whether you have a heart or not."

"I should be puzzled how to live without one, your ladyship," replied Diana; "but I assure you that after the last waltz I felt it beating very fast indeed. I am quite positive that I have a heart."

"You know well I did not speak of the physical heart, Miss Malapert," responded Lady Vengea.

"I am a very literal, practical person, your ladyship," replied Diana.

"You mean to say that you are cold and selfish—very well, perhaps you are—I do not say that you are not," and with a wave of her hand Lady Vengea intimated that Diana was free to go about her business and that the interview was ended.

Diana went away serene and smiling. The ball proceeded gaily.

(To be continued.)

### THE HANGING OF THE CRANE.\*

BY HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

#### I.

The lights are out, and gone are all the guests  
That thronging came with merriment and jests  
To celebrate the Hanging of the Crane  
In the new house,—into the night are gone;  
But still the fire upon the hearth burns on,  
And I alone remain.

Oh, fortunate, oh, happy day,  
When a new household finds its place  
Among the myriad homes of earth,  
Like a new star just sprung to birth  
And rolled on its harmonious way  
Into the boundless realms of space!  
So said the guests in speech and song,  
As in the chimney, burning bright,  
We hung the iron crane to-night,  
And merry was the feast and long.

#### II.

And now I sit and muse on what may be,  
And in my vision see, or seem to see,  
Through floating vapours interlaced with light,  
Shapes indeterminate, that gleam and fade,  
As shadows passing into deeper shade  
Sink and elude the sight.

For two alone, there in the hall,  
Is spread the table round and small;  
Upon the polished silver shine  
The evening lamps, but more divine  
The light of love shines over all;  
Of love that says not mine and thine,  
But ours, for ours is thine and mine.  
They want no guests to come between  
Their tender glances like a screen,  
And tell them tales of land and sea,  
And whatsoever may betide  
The great forgotten world outside;  
They want no guests; they needs must be  
Each other's own best company.

#### III.

The picture fades; as at a village fair  
A showman's views dissolve into the air,  
To reappear transfigured on the screen,  
So in my fancy this; and now once more  
In part transfigured, through the open door  
Appears the self-same scene.

Seated I see the two again,  
But not alone; they entertain  
A little angel unaware,  
With face as round as is the moon;  
A royal guest with flaxen hair,  
Who, throned upon his lofty chair,  
Drums on the table with his spoon,  
Then drops it careless on the floor,  
To grasp at things unseen before,  
Are these celestial manners? These  
The ways that win the arts that please?  
Ah, yes; consider well the guest,  
And whatsoever he does seems best,  
He ruleth by the right divine  
Of helplessness, so lately born  
In purple chambers of the morn,  
As sovereign over thee and thine.  
He speaketh not, and yet there lies  
A conversation in his eyes;

The golden silence of the Greek,  
The gravest wisdom of the wise,  
Not spoken in language, but in looks  
More legible than printed books,  
As if he could but would not speak.

And now, oh, monarch absolute,  
Thy power is put to proof; for lo!  
Resistless, fathomless and slow,  
The nurse comes rustling like the sea,  
And pushes back thy chair and thee,  
And so good night to King Canute.

#### IV.

As one who walking in a forest sees  
A lovely landscape through the parted trees,  
Then sees it not for boughs that intervene,  
Or as we see the moon sometimes revealed  
Through drifting clouds, and then again con-  
cealed,

So I beheld the scene.

There are two guests at table now;  
The king, deposed, and older grown,  
No longer occupies the throne—  
The crown is on his sister's brow;  
A Princess from the Fairy Tales,  
The very pattern girl of girls,  
All-covered and embowered in curls,  
Rose-tinted from the Isle of Flowers,  
And sailing with soft silken sails  
From far-off Dreamland into ours.  
Above their bowls with rims of blue  
Four azure eyes of deeper hue  
Are looking, dreamy with delight;  
Limpid as planets, that emerge  
Above the ocean's rounded verge,  
Soft shining through the summer night.  
Steadfast they gaze, yet nothing see  
Beyond the horizon of their bowls;  
Nor care they for the world that rolls  
With all its freight of troubled souls  
Into the days that are to be.

#### V.

Again the tossing boughs shut out the scene,  
Again the drifting vapours intervene,  
And the moon's pallid disk is hidden quite;  
And now I see the table wider grown,  
As round a pebble into water thrown  
Dilates a ring of light.

I see the table wider grown,  
I see it garlanded with guests,  
As if fair Ariadne's Crown  
Out of the sky had fallen down;  
Maidens within whose tender breasts  
A thousand restless hopes and fears,  
Forth reaching to the coming years,  
Flutter awhile, then quiet lie,  
Like timid birds that fain would fly,  
But do not dare to leave their nests;  
And youths, who in their strength elate  
Challenge the van and front of fate,  
Eager as champions to be  
In the divine knight-errantry  
Of youth, that travels sea and land  
Seeking adventures, or pursues  
Through cities and through solitudes  
Frequented by the lyric muse,  
The phantom with the beckoning hand,  
That still allures and still eludes,  
Oh, sweet illusions of the brain!  
Oh, sudden thrills of fire and frost!  
The world is bright while ye remain,  
And dark and dead when ye are lost!

#### VI.

The meadow-brook, that seemeth to stand still  
Quickens its current as it nears the mill;  
And so the stream of Time that hithereth  
In level places, and so dull appears,  
Runs with a swifter current as it nears  
The gloomy mills of Death.

And now, like the magician's scroll,  
That in the owner's keeping shrinks  
With every wish he speaks or thinks,  
Till the last wish consumes the whole,  
The table dwindles, and again  
I see the two alone remain.  
The crown of stars is broken in parts;  
Its jewels, brighter than the day,  
Have one by one been stolen away  
To shine in other homes and hearts.  
One is a wanderer now afar  
In Ceylon or in Zanzibar,  
Or sunny regions in Cathay;  
And one is in the boisterous camp,  
'Mid clink of arms and horse's tramp,  
And battle's terrible array.

I see the patient mother read,  
With aching heart, of wrecks that float  
Disabled on those seas remote,  
Or of some great heroic deed

On battle-fields, where thousands bleed  
To lift one hero into fame.  
Anxious she bends her graceful head  
Above those chronicles of pain,  
And trembles with a secret dread,  
Lest there among the drowned or slain  
She find the one beloved name.

#### VII.

After a day of cloud and wind and rain  
Sometimes the setting sun breaks out again,  
And touching all the darksome woods with  
light,

Smiles on the fields until they laugh and sing,  
Then like a ruby from the horizon's ring  
Drops down into the night.

What see I now? The night is fair,  
The storm of grief, the clouds of care,  
The wind, the rain, have passed away;  
The lamps are lit, the fires burn bright,  
The house is full of life and light—  
It is the Golden Wedding-day.  
The guests come thronging in once more,  
Quick footsteps sound along the floor,  
The trooping children crowd the stair,  
And in and out and everywhere  
Flashes along the corridor  
The sunshine of their golden hair.

On the round table in the hall  
Another Ariadne's Crown  
Out of the sky hath fallen down;  
More than one Monarch of the Moon  
Is drumming with his silver spoon;  
The light of love shines over all.  
Oh, fortunate, oh, happy day!  
The people sing, the people say.  
The ancient bridegroom and the bride,  
Serenely smiling on the scene,  
Behold well-pleased on every side  
Their forms and features multiplied,  
As the reflection of a light  
Between two burnished mirrors gleams,  
Or lamps upon a bridge at night  
Stretch on and on before the sight,  
Till the long vista endless seems.

\* *Pendre la crémillère*, to hang the crane, is the French expression for a house-warming, or the first party given in a new house.

THERE is now living at Lower Hale Cottages, near Margate, Mrs. Mary Brockman, née King, who was born on the 30th of September, 1772, and baptized on the 4th of the following month. Her eldest son, Thomas Brockman, who has recently completed his 80th year, is also still living.

The newest earrings in Paris are of bone. They are cut in the form of many-pointed stars tipped with different colours. A small star fastens in the lobe of the ear, and a larger one hangs underneath. They are very odd and very pretty. The first made were exhibited at the Vienna Exposition.

THE ASHANTEE WAR MEDAL.—The Ashantee war medal is very properly to be awarded to all those who were on the Gold Coast during the progress of the war, whether or not they were engaged before the enemy. The decision is to be commended, seeing that it will prevent much heartburning among those who left England in the hope of taking the field, but who, either from ill-health, the want of transport, or other causes, were unable to do so.

Two Russian guns, trophies of the Crimean war, have been received at the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, having been returned from Colchester, where they stood for about 17 years. Several other trophies of a similar character have been given up by other towns, and are on their way to Woolwich, where they will be broken up. There are very few Russian guns to be seen in the Royal Arsenal, and these are, generally speaking, only such as are remarkable for some peculiarity—one, for instance, having a cannon ball from a British gun lodged in the muzzle and jammed fast.

SOME Roman ladies have presented to the king, together with an address, one of the largest bouquets of flowers ever seen. It was chiefly composed of camellias of different colours, and the vase containing it was woven round with an infinite number of violets of different sorts. On the base was the inscription, elegantly designed with mosaic flowers, "To His Majesty the King of Italy, some Roman ladies, 23rd March, 1874." This magnificent nosegay stood upon a groundwork of ivory, and as it was being carried across the Piazza di Spagna, on its way up to the Quirinal, it looked like a flowery mountain, and attracted universal admiration.

PICTURE FRAMES.—It is not everybody who has taste in choosing picture-frames. To many, therefore, a few simple rules for framing chromos will be acceptable. As a general rule, the predominant colours in a picture should be taken as a guide. Black walnut frames, or brown panels, will be suit-



able for bright pictures, while dark pictures, and especially those in which brown predominates, should always be framed in gold. When unable to decide between the two, take a gold frame by all means, as gold will agree with every picture. Black walnut, especially when enriched by delicate engraved and gilt lines, is likewise very beautiful. The width of the frame should also be determined by the character of the picture. The stronger the picture the wider the frame should be. Width of frame adds to the importance and dignity of the picture. The style of wall-paper should, in some degree, influence the selection of a frame. When the paper is figured, the frame should be wide, in order to separate the picture from the paper. The best background for pictures is a neutral gray or a dark maroon.

## THE BLENKARNE INHERITANCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Miss Arlingcourt's Will," "The Ebony Casket,"  
"The Secret of Schwarzenburg," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER XIII.

AT Garden Reach the absence of General Vansittant had made little impression except it might be with Aimée, the Hindoo woman, who went wandering about her master's deserted apartments with the alternations of rage and triumph, despair and exultation that characterized her impetuous, undisciplined nature. The blood-stained towels and garments had not escaped her search. She pondered over them with a fierce intensity of thought which, however, failed to show her the true explanation. Finally she ordered her own palanquin, and declared her intention of following the master to Allahabad. There was no one there of sufficient authority to gainsay this determination, and accordingly one cool morning, just as the sun was rising, Aimée's palanquin appeared in the narrow avenue of the general's country seat, and Aimée herself descended from it with a little hesitancy, but yet with a gleam of triumphant satisfaction in her eyes.

"Where is the sahib general?" she asked of the Hindoo servant, who rose up from his mat by the entrance way as her light step crossed the stone flagging.

"His excellency is over beyond. He has just had his coffee and is enjoying his pipe."

Aimée followed the man's glance, and saw a familiar figure, in a well-known dressing-gown, reclining comfortably in a hammock, swung under a vine-bung arbour.

"And where is the valet, Adam?" she asked, hoping to hear that the latter was engaged at a distance, and she could have speech with the general undisturbed by his presence.

The dull fellow stared at her, and repeated:

"Adam, Adam—"

"Soul of stupidity, I mean the general's valet, Adam," retorted Aimée, impatiently.

"The sahib Adam. Oh, yes, he is not here. He has not been here since the sahib general came."

"Good! It is better than I could expect," muttered Aimée, and walked swiftly toward the arbour, assuming her softest look and meekest smile.

Light as was her step, the occupant of the hammock turned, and calmly puffing a cloud of silver-edged smoke all about him, he said, in the full soldier voice she knew so well:

"Halt there, Aimée! What brings you to Allahabad without my orders?"

"The soul of Aimée sickened for her master's voice. The desolation frenzied her. Let my master pardon his slave!"

And the woman knelt down and laid her face in the dust.

"It was foolishly done, woman. But get you into the house, and trouble me not with your presence until I call for it," answered he.

"But, my lord, my master," began Aimée, as she rose and came a step nearer the hammock.

"Peace," thundered the general. "Have I not said it? Do I give the same command twice?"

Aimée made a mute obeisance and turned, and with a lowering brow retreated to the house, going backward all the way. When she reached the threshold, however, she turned with a sullen, malignant glance, muttering:

"Ay, I will wait till you call me before I speak again, but I can watch and listen—ay, and act."

She hastened into the quarters she had occupied before on similar visits, and finding the native servant plied him with questions, growing more and more puzzled at the answers.

The sahib general—what had he done? Why, he had eaten and slept, and walked a little, and rode twice.

"But has he been alone?"

"All alone, except when he first came. The sahib doctor was with him then."

"And Adam?"

"Yes, maybe. I forgot about Adam. I think he went away with the doctor, answered the servant, dubiously.

"It is strange!" muttered the puzzled Aimée; "none of them seem to know anything about Adam. I never knew the general to do without him so long."

And, aloud, she questioned farther:

"And the general does nothing but eat, and sleep, and ride, and is all alone, and yet drives poor Aimée away when she comes. That is strange."

"Ah! he talks with the pen like the monshee," replied the other, eagerly, glad to have something positive to tell. "He writes, and writes, and many letters has he sent away."

"Ah, yes," spoke Aimée, hastily, "now you have understanding, good Abjib. And where does the general sit when he writes?"

"In the little room out from his chamber. It is there I take his letters and papers that come down from Calcutt."

"And it is there I must put the cooling drinks and the tempting basket of fruit," said Aimée, eagerly. "No one understands his tastes so well as I."

And she smiled broadly, showing the pearly row of even teeth beneath, as her hand crept under the folds of her dress and closed over the bunch of keys concealed there.

She went up at once, her way undisputed by the servants, who had known the privileged position she held in other days, and busied herself in putting the room in order, as it really needed.

Now and then she cast a sharp, quick glance out of the window which showed the arbour and the swinging hammock. Swiftly her supple fingers applied the keys till they had found one to fit the lock of the large drawer of the writing-table, as, of course, one would, for had she not taken the bunch of keys from the general's room in Calcutta, and did not the label fastened with them on the steel ring say "Allahabad"?

Aimée smiled again triumphantly. She held in her hands the opening of all the doors and locked places in the house. And while others slept could not Aimée wake and wander where she would?

"It is the secret I want," she murmured, fiercely; "the secret that will make Amri's path clear to walk in. Then Aimée will go, and even the sahib general's voice shall not call her back."

Now she opened the drawer and contented herself with glancing in, smiling darkly as she saw a letter lying nearly finished, and commencing "Dear Algon."

"Amri will read it, and Amri must answer it. It is well I sent him one of the captain's letters. He has a cunning hand, he will copy it safely," mused she. "I was foolish not to have charged him to make sure work with this Algon. If I could have gone with him. There were many ways, it must be so easy a thing to do on shipboard. Tush! just a push, a careless shove on a dark night, and none would ever know how it was done. I am only afraid Amri will be cowardly."

She glanced at the papers longingly, but resolutely closed the drawer, consoling herself with the thought:

"Not now. I can wait. I can wait patiently, but I shall read every line there."

She made good her word. That night, when all the rest of the household slumbered, and while the regular breathing of the sleeping occupant came to her ears from the master's chamber, Aimée sat three livelong hours, never so much as rustling a paper, over the general's desk, and sifted its contents thoroughly. She had learned more than she anticipated, for, lo! there in the blank book with the locked clasps was a diary, or rather a biography written day by day, but going back twenty years into a history that would evidently make all things clear as noonday for herself, but, best of all, for Amri.

He was writing it up—that, then, was the secret of his solitary retirement.

Aimée clapped her hands noiselessly. Let him write, and night by night she would come and read, and reading, copy and send away to Amri. What could be more satisfactory?

She stole away with an exulting heart, which, however, received a terrible blow the next day when papers and letters arrived from below. She heard something the messenger said about a great catastrophe, and hastened out to hear what it might be. But at almost the first sentence her blood seemed to chill with horror.

The steamer was wrecked—the steamer that had taken Amri away from Calcutta.

She clung to the doorway where she stood, and a fierce rage came over her, an insane passion as if wind and sea had conspired against her. It never occurred to her that others were stricken. Alone

she saw her beautiful Amri going down into the boiling surge. Her handsome boy, her idol, her one treasure, for whom she was planning and plotting. What was the value of the noble steamship, with the costly cargo and priceless freight of human souls, even though it had gone down to its ocean grave, in the eyes of this wild Hindoo woman? Nothing—nothing whatever, if only Amri was saved.

She heard, as in a dream, the general's husky voice demanding the papers, while her dizzy brain whirled and seethed, and her heart beat with a hard, fierce pain, for she knew when he read the names of the boat's company which had been picked up by the companion steamer and brought in again to Calcutta, that neither Algon Vansittant's nor Amri's name was among the saved.

She got away somewhere, and lay in a numbed heap, paying no attention to what was going on about her, and caring for nothing, nothing in the world now, not even for the anxious suspense which she knew the general must also be suffering. So a week went on. How she lived, why she did not die, the unhappy mother inquired not. At the expiration of that time came joyful news. The missing boat's company had been taken off an island and carried to Bombay, and were already forwarded again upon their journey. Conspicuous among the names, of course, was that of General Vansittant's son, and the details of the great sufferings of the survivors were given in sufficiently extravagant terms, all owing, as was asserted, to the unprecedentedly barbarous conduct of one of the passengers, who stole away to a passing ship with the boat, leaving his companions to perish.

Roused from her great trance of horror, Aimée was once more keen and vigilant. She knew in a moment who was the passenger who had fled with the boat. She even exulted in this proof of Amri's earnestness.

"It would have been an excellent thing—a safe thing," she muttered, without a single compunctious thought for other men and women and children, who must have borne such heavy grief had not the infamous plan miscarried. "Amri did not count on the young man's escaping. It is well I arranged to write him. I must send a letter promptly to warn him to be prepared for him. I know he has managed to secure the belt and the papers. His leaving thus proves it to me. Well done, my Amri. I will ferret out the whole secret, and then I will follow you."

Once again she crept about the house with stealthy steps while others slept, and again she returned to her midnight labours, which were necessarily slow and tedious, for she had little practice of penmanship of late, and she set herself resolutely to copying the whole contents of the clasped book.

One night she found something startling; for she sprang up, her great black eyes all aflame with delirious joy, and ran out—in the garden, and flung herself down, and fairly cried out with very excess of joy.

"Oh, wonderful—oh, dazzling fortune!" she repeated to herself again and again. "If I had only known, I would have gone with him. We would have waited for nothing else. My Amri should have had his palace by this time. But he has it! he has the wonderful belt with him! Oh, the matchless secret! I could fly on the wings of the wind to reach Amri and secure the safety of the belt! If he should lose it! Ah, evil powers, if Amri should lose it before I tell! But shall I dare tell him? Shall I dare trust the knowledge to a letter? Who knows what danger might come from it? No, no! I will only charge him not to lose it—to hold it safe till I come. Oh, wonderful, magic belt! It shall make a queen of Aimée, and her son a prince!"

Then, remembering that she had left the desk unlocked, she crept back in her stealthy fashion, and replaced everything as she found it, that the general's careful eye might find no signs of disturbance. While she was doing this she heard a quick movement from the other room, and then the low-muttered words of the disturbed sleeper. Shading her taper with her hand, Aimée crept out of the room, and then some sudden impulse came to her, and she went boldly into the general's room, stepping lightly over the servant, whose dark limbs were stretched before the threshold.

"My master," she spoke, softly, "you called. What will you have?"

No answer. Advancing still nearer to the bedside, Aimée cautiously flung the taper's glow upon the couch. A hand hanging over the side, the sleeve pushed up from the wrist, caught her attention. A long, narrow seam left its zig-zag red line across the wrist. Aimée stared at it in deep amazement, then hastily lowered her taper, and carefully scrutinized the sleeper's face. A tiger glow broke over her own and mingled with the wild amazement and incredulity there. The features, the contour, the general air, all were similar to that of the master she had so long served with conflicting sentiments of fear

and love. But upon close scrutiny she saw the difference.

And that hand! Would Aimée ever forget that savage moment when, in her jealous rage at Adam's refusing her admittance to the general's private room, she had sprung upon him, and, in the fashion of the fierce, wild animal she really was, had fastened those small white teeth of hers upon his wrist? Would she ever forget? For from that moment she well knew had begun the weakening of the influence she had once held over the general.

Satisfied at length, the woman slowly withdrew, extinguished her taper, and crept into her hammock, beside which her own especial handmaiden was lying fast asleep.

But at that early hour in which all Indian establishments alike bestir themselves, she was up again and out in the courtyard, looking for Ahdoohlah, the chief of the palanquin bearers.

Ahdoohlah was a straight, smart young Rajpoot, with a brighter intelligence of look than the majority of his class.

Aimée began by talking about the soft-eyed, graceful young Naius left behind in Calcutta, upon whom, as she knew, Ahdoohlah cast many an admiring and longing eye.

"I shall help you myself when it comes time for you to make the marriage presents," she said; "and I will persuade the master to be generous with you."

Upon which Ahdoohlah salaamed to Aimée almost as profoundly as he would have done to the sahib himself.

"And by the way, Ahdoohlah, what has become of the sahib Adam?" she said, carelessly. "He came with you when the sahib general made his journey?"

"You say right," returned Ahdoohlah, looking down thoughtfully. "He came with us part of the way."

"And did the general keep to the palanquin all the way?"

"Oh, no, he rode sometimes, and the sahib Adam went in the palanquin," was the artless rejoinder.

Aimée stared at him, and knit her black eyebrows in perplexity, and then her face cleared again.

"I see," she said, "it was when you rested at the bungalows that the change was made. Your bearers were sent out to rest, and the sahib Adam stayed alone with his master?"

The man nodded.

"Now, Ahdoohlah, think deep before you answer. Where was it that the sahib Adam left you, that there was but one sahib either in the palanquin or on the horse?"

"It was Meerzaporee, perhaps," returned he, slowly.

Aimée stamped her foot impatiently.

"Think, Ahdoohlah! Shut your eyes and go back with the mind."

"They were alone so long at Meerzaporee," whimpered Ahdoohlah, "and the sahib doctor was there waiting for us, and we were sent away to the dak-bearers' quarters and rested, while the new bearers took on the palanquin, and in their turn waited for us. I can only tell that when we got into Allahabad the sahib Adam was not there, for the sahib general got out of the palanquin alone."

"It is at Meerzaporee then I must search," muttered Aimée, under her breath, and knit her forehead again with its tangle of perplexed lines.

Ahdoohlah was looking at her with aroused curiosity, and presently made aware of it the woman turned slowly saying, carelessly:

"He lost the amulet I hung on his chain. If I could know just everywhere the palanquin stopped, I am sure I could find it, for these sacred things are never lost, and who knows what misfortune may come without it?"

Ahdoohlah glanced down at the sacred thread knotted across his own dusky shoulder and shared her concern.

"I will find out about it all," said he, "when I go back to-morrow."

"That is well," replied Aimée, and returned to the house, but took care to keep out of the general's way, for surely the general it seemed to be.

She marvelled herself at the striking likeness, now she saw him again in the general's familiar clothes, with the gray hair arranged in the latter's peculiar fashion.

The proceedings of the day confirmed what she had already heard of the master's method of passing the time. He rose early, breakfasted, and went out to walk in the garden, or to smoke in the hammock. Then he came in and spent two hours steadily at his writing-table. After that, a siesta during the heat of the day, and as it grew cooler more writing; then dinner, and a gallop over to the parade ground and back again. It was very a simple life—no company

whatever, for the few officers of rank to warrant their calling were sent away with the general's regrets, but the assurance of his impartial retirement from all visiting.

Meantime the biography grew but slowly, as it seemed to Aimée's impatience, though she found work enough in copying. Little enough did the unconscious writer suspect whose eager hand turned each freshly-written page, what gleaming eye ran swiftly along each newly-developed revelation.

For one explanation she waited feverishly. What had become of the true General Vansittart? And who was this man who had served him so many years as a servant, and had now stepped into his place and assumed his name? One moment her cheek paled beneath the horrible belief that her master had been murdered, and the next she gnashed her teeth in rage, fearing that he had gone himself secretly to England, and would discover the false position of Amri and ruin all her ambitious plans.

She made a hurried journey to Meerzaporee, and came back with all her plans matured, the ambush cunningly laid, ready at a single touch to fall away and precipitate those who alone had power to meddle with her son's movements into its deadly pitfall.

Only one thing she waited for—the completion of the journal.

"And then," she said, over and over to herself, "and then for Amri and Aimée prosperity and riches and honour, and the galleys to the murderers of General Ralph Vansittart!"

#### CHAPTER XIV.

THE next day Frank Osborne found himself looking longingly towards the manor-house even before the accustomed hour of recreation came around, and his thoughts, despite his best efforts, were continually querying how would Aubrey Roscoe receive him when he presented himself for a renewal of their acquaintance, and what could be the origin of the mysterious feud between Blenkarne Terrace and its ancient manor house.

Lady Blenkarne sent for him to come to the library just after dinner, and there had been an opportunity for him to propose the last question, but a wearied, exhausted look on her face warned him to refrain.

The immediate matter she had occasion to speak about referred to the new attendant she proposed to place as a sort of subordinate to John, and she was anxious that Frank should see two candidates and choose between them.

"Faithfulness and reticence, you understand, are most important requisites," concluded she. "I will not have a babbling tongue around me, nor must the fellow have followers or visitors. Insure these, and pay him whatever he asks. I rely upon you to settle the affair."

"I have been thinking about myself, Lady Blenkarne," spoke Frank, promptly but respectfully. "I had not given it a thought until yesterday, when I discovered that a travelling acquaintance of mine lives in Exeter. It will be a source of pleasure to me if I renew the acquaintance. I have been thinking why I could not have a room up in the town and have it understood that at such hours, on such days, I shall be there."

"An excellent arrangement," she said, languidly. "It will be much healthier for you too. I should think it would be a vast relief to change the air, and leave behind all the depressing influences of that schoolroom. Under the circumstances it would be pleasanter for me likewise. Then you are free to entertain whatever friends you choose without any regard to their suitability here."

"You have no restrictions, then?" he asked, the colour mounting faintly into his cheek.

"Certainly not; why should I? The restriction's only in regard to your answering any personal questions in reference to myself or Sir Marmaduke. I thought that was all understood. The happier you are, the wider your acquaintance in the place, the better I shall be pleased. You must allow me to pay the rent and furnish the apartments becomingly, for I would suggest that you retain a suite, and I see not why you might not sleep there as frequently as you like, especially if we provide John with a fellow-servant."

"You are only too kind to me, Lady Blenkarne," said Frank, with deep emotion; "if only I could feel that my office was not a sinecure."

"But a very necessary sinecure, my dear Mr. Osborne. Don't I understand how much more of a feat it is for you to teach this pupil to count a dozen than to take ordinary lads through Virgil? Don't undervalue your own services. I promise you, if you will only succeed in teaching him to go through a public representation like any ordinary person for ten minutes, twice a year, I shall consider twenty times your salary, a poor reward. There, let us leave the trying subject. I was intending to order the carriage for a drive. Supposing you go with me, and we

settle the affair of the rooms promptly. Besides, I promised to go and look at a new picture in the gallery, and your judgment will help me. It will pass away the time." Here there broke in a weary sigh. "If not otherwise promised, will you not accompany me, Mr. Osborne?"

"With much pleasure, your ladyship," replied Frank.

And so it happened that her ladyship's grand carriage drew up at the door of the picture-gallery, and Frank descended and assisted Lady Blenkarne to alight, and gave her his arm, while a little knot of spectators looked on in idle curiosity.

Glancing toward his companion, Frank discovered a contemptuous smile curling her lip, but she made no remark.

The gallery held a little crowd likewise attracted, it seemed, by the fame of the new picture.

Still retaining her hold on his arm, Lady Blenkarne gently guided the tutor out of the crowd to the rear of the gallery.

"We will not mix with the crowd. Let us wait until it has thinned," she whispered; "but there is a little favourite of mine out beyond, which will well repay our attention. I know you will like it as much as I do."

Two gentlemen were just before them as they paused before the picture. One a slender, graceful young man with dark, Spanish complexion and magnificent black eyes, whose face they could see, but the other stood with his back toward them.

The latter turned, however, as Lady Blenkarne spoke, and Frank recognized at once the grave, fine-looking gentleman who had been with Ethel Roscoe in the lane. He felt Lady Blenkarne's fingers clench a desperate hold upon his arm, and, turning, saw her eyes flashing with a proud, feverish glow, her cheeks all scarlet, her head thrown back to its haughtiest height.

"Yes, my dear Mr. Osborne," she said, in a new, unnaturally gay tone, speaking fast and lightly, "here is the little gem I promised to show you. Now tell me if I have exaggerated its beauties?"

She moved forward gracefully, her delicately gloved hand pointing to the picture, and seemed entirely oblivious of the presence of any other soul in the gallery except herself.

The gentleman stood for a moment like one transfixed by an uncanny spell, looking straight into her face, with a wild, wistful, imploring glance. Then suddenly a black, stern shadow dropped over him, his lip curled in a cold contempt, he stepped backward, made an odd gesture, and said calmly to his companion:

"We will look in here at another and more agreeable moment, if you please, Captain Vansittart."

Scarcely a moment more, and they were alone in that part of the gallery. Lady Blenkarne's face had grown deadly pale. Frank saw the white teeth gnawing upon the pallid lip in fierce determination—he could feel the chilly dampness of her hand, and the swaying of her form.

"Let me bring you a seat, Lady Blenkarne," exclaimed Frank, in much alarm.

"Nay," returned she, sternly. "I need nothing. Look at the picture! Talk to me! I will have no notice taken of this idiotic weakness of mine."

Hardly knowing what he said, Frank attempted to make a few remarks about the painting. Before he finished, she said, quietly:

"Thank you, my friend. I am quite recovered. We will have our look now at the new picture. And you must tell me if I shall buy it for the one vacant panel in the upper hall. See, this is it! Is not the colouring a little exaggerated? But that outline is wonderful. Yes, I like it better than I anticipated. I wish I had seen it before there was a public exhibition. It is no advantage to it that so many plebeian eyes have examined it to-day."

And here she laughed lightly, with a ring of scorn still, and glanced around behind her, as if she had spoken for other ears than his. All the remainder of their stay in the gallery she talked incessantly, brilliantly, and most entertainingly, but it was painfully evident to her companion that it was under an unnatural excitement.

"And now we must not forget your rooms," spoke she, abruptly, as they crossed the upper hall. "The office ought to be here. Supposing you inquire."

He did so, and the janitor came out promptly.

"Just one suite left," he began, volubly. "The other was taken this morning. The two make the very finest apartments in the building, and admirably suited for gentlemen of taste. Rather expensive, to be sure, in comparison with the upper floor rooms, but just look at the convenience of those, and their incomparable situation."

"Let me see them," interrupted her ladyship, testily. "But if there is no choice, there is nothing to do but accept them, I suppose."

"If you had the choice I am very sure you would



still prefer these that are left. The other young gentleman seemed chiefly actuated by the warmth. The sun lies a little longer in the windows of the left hand apartment, but at this season I hardly call that a recommendation. However, Colonel Blenkarn said his young friend is just from a tropical climate, which makes a difference, no doubt," explained the janitor, throwing open the door as he spoke. "Now here you have these corner windows, which give a view of both streets—and only look at this one! There, do you see how you look across that gap in the roofs, and have that lovely bit of rural landscape? Our artists are always admiring this window. Those magnificent woods are the park of the Blenkarn Terrace, a magnificent old place, and behind you see the towers of the house."

The man did not recognize her ladyship, who smiled, as she carelessly followed his eager gestures, and said to Frank:

"I think he is right. You would certainly have selected this suite."

"Except for the terms," said Frank, a little ruefully. "It is highly necessary that I should begin to learn to economize."

"The terms are not for your consideration," she returned, in her most autocratic tone. "The whole affair is mine now. I mean to furnish it for you, also, according to my whim. When I am ready for you to take possession, I will send you the key. I promise you there shall be nothing to shock your taste."

"But, Lady Blenkarn—," he began.

She made a warning gesture, and returned, reproachfully:

"Do you deny me so simple a pleasure? It is for my own gratification I ask it. Colonel Blenkarn's shivering but Indian protégé has taken the first selection, but we will make him rue his blunder more than once."

She turned to the man quietly, handing him a bank-note as she said:

"You may go. Give me the key. The rooms are no longer in your keeping."

Somewhat astonished at this summary dealing, the janitor took the note, glanced at it sharply to be sure that it was more than enough for a first quarter's advance, and, bowing, withdrew.

Her ladyship walked thoughtfully around the rooms, glancing up and down, and evidently taking mental notes. At the window looking towards Blenkarn Terrace she paused, and a low, sweet smile crept from her lips over her whole face.

"Yes," said she, "I shall spend my prettiest fancy here. At this distance I can make Blenkarn Terrace a pleasant thought to you. When you look out hence you will see its beauties, and forget its hidden skeletons. There are two or three trees I see that hide a good deal. I will have them cut down. You must have a powerful field-glass on a bracket here, and we will contrive some sort of signal so that, when you are here, you can look over, and know whether you are wanted there. Doesn't it sound romantic? I have not had so pretty an opportunity for innocent enjoyment for a long time. Now I shall be absorbed and entertained for a week at least. Thank you, Mr. Osborne."

"Thank me for allowing you to use me like a prince," said Frank Osborne, a little ruefully. "Dear Lady Blenkarn, if there was only a way for me to repay you."

"Thank you again. I think you will repay me. You will be my friend," she said, turning around and looking at him earnestly. "Understand me," she added, with quiet dignity of manner. "Such a friend as a strong, right-minded young man can be to his lonely mother. Do you know how old I am? I shall be forty when the snows come again."

And with this she turned and walked away again to the window. Thence she turned and said with a strong passion shaking her rich, full voice:

"Oh, if only you were my son!"

The tears rose into Frank Osborne's eyes. How gracefully she had crushed the vague, shadowy fear that had been rising in his thoughts at the continued favours heaped upon him. He felt ashamed, rebuked, and inexpressibly grateful beside.

"Alas! would indeed such had been my favoured lot," he answered, sadly. "I have never known a mother's loving care, or tender friendship. Dear Lady Blenkarn, it seems you are taking something of her character out of the generous beneficence of your nature."

"I fear I am selfish even in my friendship," returned she, gravely, "for, ah! it is such a delight to bestow favours where one finds true worth, and I am so grateful to find some one who will not, I am sure, be false and treacherous. But we have strayed from fact to sentiment. Our errand accomplished, let us take leave of these bare and comfortable rooms. You must not have a single glimpse, until you come to take possession of the transformation I shall make."

And then under her breath she murmured too low for him to hear:

"Colonel Blenkarn's protégé and mine side by side. Wonders never cease."

As they passed out Frank locked the door and gave her the key. At the same instant the other door unclosed and they were again confronted by Colonel Blenkarn and his youthful companion.

Lady Blenkarn swept by them majestically, and descended to the street with such swiftness Frank could scarcely keep pace with her. When she was fairly seated in the carriage she discovered that she had dropped her handkerchief. A look of keen annoyance swept across her face.

"It must not be found there!" she exclaimed, and called the footman, but Frank interposed.

"Let me go, your ladyship. I know just where to look."

"Thank you, I should not mind, but there are my initials embroidered on it, and who can tell who might pick it up?"

Frank ran lightly up the steps, but when he reached the landing-place paused abruptly.

There was the gentleman—Colonel Blenkarn, as he concluded it must be—standing alone by the corner door, with the dainty morsel of cambric and embroidery in his hand, looking down upon it with a face that expressed a fierce conflict of some sort! One moment he carried it to his lips with a fervour of passionate adoration in his gesture, and the next, with a look of utter horror and loathing, he flung it from him, and it fell fluttering to the floor, while he disappeared behind the closing door.

Frank quietly advanced and secured the handkerchief, and carried it to its lawful owner, but refrained from any account of the little episode he had witnessed. And the carriage was driven swiftly home.

The young gentleman, it seemed, was not quite satisfied with the exercise already taken, but ordered the chestnut and galloped away again. He could not but smile at his own weakness when he found his heart beating a little higher and faster as he turned in again at the lane and came nearer and nearer the picturesque old place. Fortune again favoured him. A group of people were out in the vine arbour, and he saw Miss Roscoe point out his approach, upon which his Venetian acquaintance came forward and made a sign for him to pause.

Aubrey Roscoe was in a decidedly cheerful mood, and received Frank with unusual warmth considering the reserved, stately ways natural to him.

"My sister related the romantic adventure in which you played the hero's part," he said, gaily, "and my mother is very positive that it is only through your instrumentality that they escaped the deadliest peril. You were not intending to pass without calling, I hope," he continued, courteously; "pray dismount and join our little party at a rustic supper that is coming off presently out in the arbour. It would give us all great pleasure."

Nothing loth to comply, Frank dismounted and fastened his horse, and then accompanied Aubrey to the arbour.

Madame Roscoe received him with great cordiality, and presented him, with a little air of impressiveness, to her brother, Colonel Blenkarn, who in turn introduced Captain Algeron Vansittart.

Colonel Blenkarn did not remember him as the escort of Lady Blenkarn. Frank read this rather welcome assurance at his first glance. It was not so strange, for it was very evident her ladyship had absorbed all his attention. Captain Vansittart, he fancied, was not so unobservant and forgetful, although the gentleman made no allusion to any previous meeting.

The two young men eyed each other a little mistrustfully, and were vaguely conscious of a secret antagonism.

Ethel Roscoe gave him a frank, cheery smile as she put her hand lightly into his at the moment of greeting.

"Your friend, Sir Bruin, took leave of us without leaving his regrets for you, Mr. Osborne, which was rather bearish in him, I must confess. Nevertheless the keeper was profuse in his thanks, and rewarded us all generously. See! he left tickets to admit a dozen into the performance. Half of them are certainly yours. I hope you appreciate the privilege conferred."

She slipped her hand into the lace pocket of her pretty black silk apron, and drew out the gorgeous bits of pasteboard, and held them out to him laughingly.

"The ridiculous creature!" supplemented Madame Roscoe. "As if any of our family would venture into that low place among such plebeian people."

"Nay," returned Ethel, still merrily. "I must honestly confess that I can imagine circumstances under which I should enjoy the frolic hugely."

"Oh, Ethel!" was her mother's reproachful rejoinder. "You will always be odd and strange."

"Simple and natural, you mean, dear," returned Ethel, quietly, but a faint flush rose to her cheek.

"I must admit that I also share Miss Roscoe's sentiments," spoke Frank, earnestly. "I think it would be an exceedingly entertaining thing for our whole party to use the tickets, and enjoy the sport. And imagine how delighted they would be to see us—especially the bear!"

Ethel gave him a grateful glance, understanding that he had meant to come forward to her relief, but did not pursue the subject.

Captain Vansittart did not appear to his usual advantage. He was a little nervous and constrained, like one scarcely familiar with the society of ladies, and he only broke in upon the conversation with fitful bursts of admiration for everything he had seen in England except the climate. He had a way, however, of continually staring at Ethel, that made her colour more than once, and turn away in keen relief to Frank's easy, friendly politeness of manner.

She took him a little way from the arbour to show him a magnificent blue salvia in blossom, and while there said earnestly:

"I thank you for remembering my caution, Mr. Osborne. Aubrey agrees with me that under the peculiar circumstances it will be pleasanter for us all if we ignore the fact of your residence at Blenkarn Terrace. Dear mamma has had very delicate health, and some sore trials, that might well wear upon her nerves; and she is very excitable, and—"

"My dear Miss Roscoe, pray do not give me any farther reasons. It is quite enough for me that you prefer to have it so. Fortunately I shall be able to obviate all unpleasantness. I have taken rooms at the club-house, and shall receive all my personal acquaintances there."

Her face brightened.

"That is an admirable arrangement, I am sure. Now there can be no hindrance to Aubrey's renewing his pleasant acquaintance with you."

"Thank you," answered Frank, and looking over to her brother he said: "Do you know I have just discovered that my friend Roscoe is thinner and paler than when I knew him last?"

An almost inaudible sigh floated before her answer.

"Dear Aubrey! yes. He has been even more grave and still than is his wont for several weeks back. I have pondered over it, but I have not dared to hint of my discovery. I am sure that something is fretting his proud spirit. Ah, Mr. Osborne, if you were with him so many days you must have discovered his peculiar character. So chivalrous and honourable, and yet always stately and proud. He makes me think of some of the legends I read of the grand young knights who set forth after a myth, was it not?—who would not averse a single inch from the prescribed path, though ruin and death stared at them—who would not be guilty of the smallest violation of their knightly code, and yet who all unconsciously were acting cruelly to those, the nearest and dearest, who had the best claim upon their service. Sometimes I think Aubrey's pride is like that, and yet I love and admire and reverence him, I think, even beyond my mother. But we are so different, and we cannot see alike!"

And again she sighed, and then, looking up, she blushed painfully as she stammered:

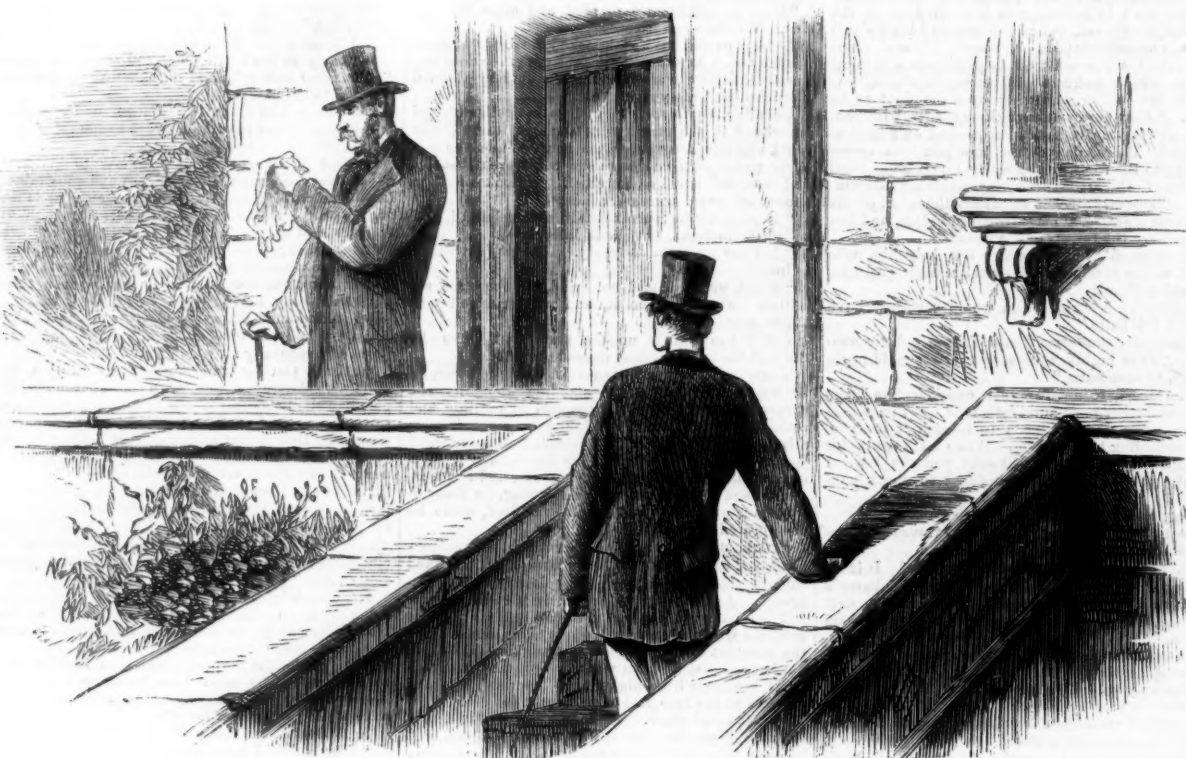
"I beg your pardon. You will indeed think I am different; sadly lacking Aubrey's reserve, thus talking so freely to a comparative stranger. I don't know why it seems as if you were an old friend."

"Because I really feel so myself," he answered, frankly, and with a tone of the utmost respect. "I think we understand each other, even at this short acquaintance, better than many old friends do. Pardon me if I venture to say that to my thinking yours is the truest pride that dares be true and frank."

"Yes, that is just what I meant," she returned, eagerly, rallying from her confusion; "that is what I try so hard to make them all see. But from my very childhood I have been chided and reproached for my lack of family pride, as if it was a great wrong on my part. I am so thankful that there is some one at last to understand me."

Here Madame Roscoe called them, and Ethel led the way back to the arbour. Frank met an angry, threatening glance from the brilliant black eyes of Captain Vansittart, but received it with a careless, slightly contemptuous smile. The former presently gave his arm to Madame Roscoe, who proposed to lead them to a knoll, from which there was a charming view of the Exe gliding placidly through the soft green meadow. Colonel Blenkarn followed them, and won the young man's keen interest and respect before he had talked with them ten minutes. He was evidently a gentleman of culture and varied experience, and there was the same indescribable air of ingenious goodness which had already magnetically, as it were, impressed Frank in the niece.

Madame Roscoe was less engaging. She had a haughty and yet peevish manner, and a continual



[THE HANDKERCHIEF.]

reference to herself in all she said and did that was a little tiresome.

She caught Frank's glance toward the walled embankment.

"Ah!" spoke she, quickly, "do not look in that direction. You see that we are cut off from the view of Blenkarne Terrace. The time was when Guy and I roamed freely there, and were looked upon as the rightful heirs. But now the low-born usurper rules in the house where my father was born—where—"

"Anna, my dear Anna!" interposed Colonel Blenkarne, "spare Mr. Osborne these painful allusions to strictly family matters."

"Why should I keep silence?" returned she, roused by even this gentle opposition into indignant resistance. "Will not Mr. Osborne see it for himself if he remains in Exeter? And why should I not proclaim that woman's vile character to one who may perhaps see her in all her flaunting grandeur, her deceitful beauty, and be deceived and cajoled likewise? Is it you, Guy—you who at this late day uphold Lady Blenkarne's treachery?"

Frank tried his best not to see how deadly pale the gentleman grew. It was a situation of keen embarrassment to himself, but he rushed out of it by exclaiming loudly over the first flowering shrub that came in his way; and he talked so much about it, and asked so many questions, Madame Roscoe found it impossible to break in upon him and force a return to the distasteful subject.

"The first time I am alone with Madame Roscoe I will let her free her mind thoroughly," mentally decided Frank; "it will be the only way to prevent constant annoyance, if I am to become intimate and friendly here, as I intend to be."

He took means to return to the other group shortly, and fancied that the colonel abetted the movement.

They found Ethel standing with downcast eyes and drooping head, with that pink flush on her cheeks, which Frank, who was himself an inveterate blusher, had already learned to interpret as the expression of some secret annoyance or otherwise agitated emotion. In her hand she held an open ivory box, carved in the patient Chinese fashion, from which rippled over, like linked bubbles of the goldenest sunshine, a necklace of the most perfect amber.

"What wonderful amber!" exclaimed Madame Roscoe, in her fervid fashion. "Oh, Ethel, where did you get them?"

"Captain Vansittant has just presented it," answered her daughter, in a low voice. "I hardly think I should keep them, however, they are so valuable and rare. Just see what an inward glow there seems to be at the heart of every bead! They

are very beautiful! I thank you exceedingly for your good will, Captain Vansittant, but—"

And here, looking up, she met not only the glittering black eye of the donor, but her brother's with a shade of keen disappointment falling over it, and her mother's undisguised rebuking her instinctive reluctance. She faltered visibly, and was evidently deeply distressed. Before she could finish her sentence her mother swept forward with that courtly air of hers.

"My dear child, I think in this case you can forego the very natural and maidenly fear of receiving a favour from so new an acquaintance. But Captain Vansittant, you must remember, comes with such endorsements as put him immediately into the small circle of our near and trusted friends. From him you may accept this beautiful present freely."

Poor Ethel! How could she say that it was just from him she was so unwilling to accept them? That there was something in the cold glance of those brilliant eyes that made her heart sicken in deep repugnance and vague dread?

She only stood with downcast eyes and tremulous lips that could not find words, uneasily turning the box to and fro.

Madame Roscoe assumed the question to be settled. She turned to the handsome East Indian with her most gracious smile.

"They are the most perfect specimens of amber I have ever seen. You must have searched long for them, Captain Vansittant."

"I brought them from Calcutta on purpose—for the young lady," spoke out Captain Vansittant, bluntly. "They are nothing to the jewels she shall wear when—"

And here it seemed to occur to him that he was a little premature in assuming his claim, for he broke off with a conscious laugh, and, stepping to Ethel's side, he took the box, and, lifting the little tray, showed a pair of bracelets underneath, matching the necklace.

"I am sure they will be becoming to Miss Ethel," said he.

Madame Roscoe took out the necklace and clasped it around the slender white throat. Yes, it was becoming. No one, not even Frank Osborne, who secretly wished the ornaments and their giver back in the torrid glow of their native clime, could deny the winsome charm that line of sparkling golden globules imparted to the pearly skin, the soft blue eyes, the brown waving hair.

"Charming! charming! Oh, Ethel, they are just what you need with your blue barge!" cried the mother delightedly.

"They are certainly wonderful in their effect, Ethel," even declared grave, stately Aubrey. "Something about them seems to bestow a full-dress charm suggestive of all dainty and ladylike accompaniments. You will always be well dressed when you wear them."

Ethel looked up now with a smile.

"You see your gift pleases my friends, Captain Vansittant, and for their sake I accept it."

But Frank saw how quickly she removed the necklace and put it back into the box.

"They are certainly very beautiful," said he, in a low voice, as he came to her presently, when the others were busy talking; "yet I confess I am glad you do not like them."

She flashed a single questioning look into his face, and then her eyelids dropped.

"I believe I am strangely susceptible to invisible influences," returned she, in the same voice; "but something seems to warn me against them, for all I know how foolish the idea is."

"And now, Ethel," called Madame Roscoe, "you may tell Margery we are ready for our rustic feast. It seems like old times to be enjoying such company. Alack! how many times we have received our guests in the fine old dining-hall of Blenkarne Terrace. You remember that, Guy? Well, well, we have the Blenkarne blood in our veins, and can hold up our heads with the proudest in the land when we talk of lineage. And that is more than the present mistress of the house of our fathers can say."

Ethel hastened to the house, and Aubrey, in his calm, well-bred fashion, interposed a remark that carried the conversation once again from the dangerous subject.

Madame Roscoe looked her sense of injured innocence, but was by no means daunted, for twice during the pretty, dainty little lunch that followed she threw in boldly her reminiscence of certain fêtes at Blenkarne Terrace before she and her family had been treacherously thrust out of their rights.

Captain Vansittant seemed both ready and willing to hear the full particulars both of the past and present.

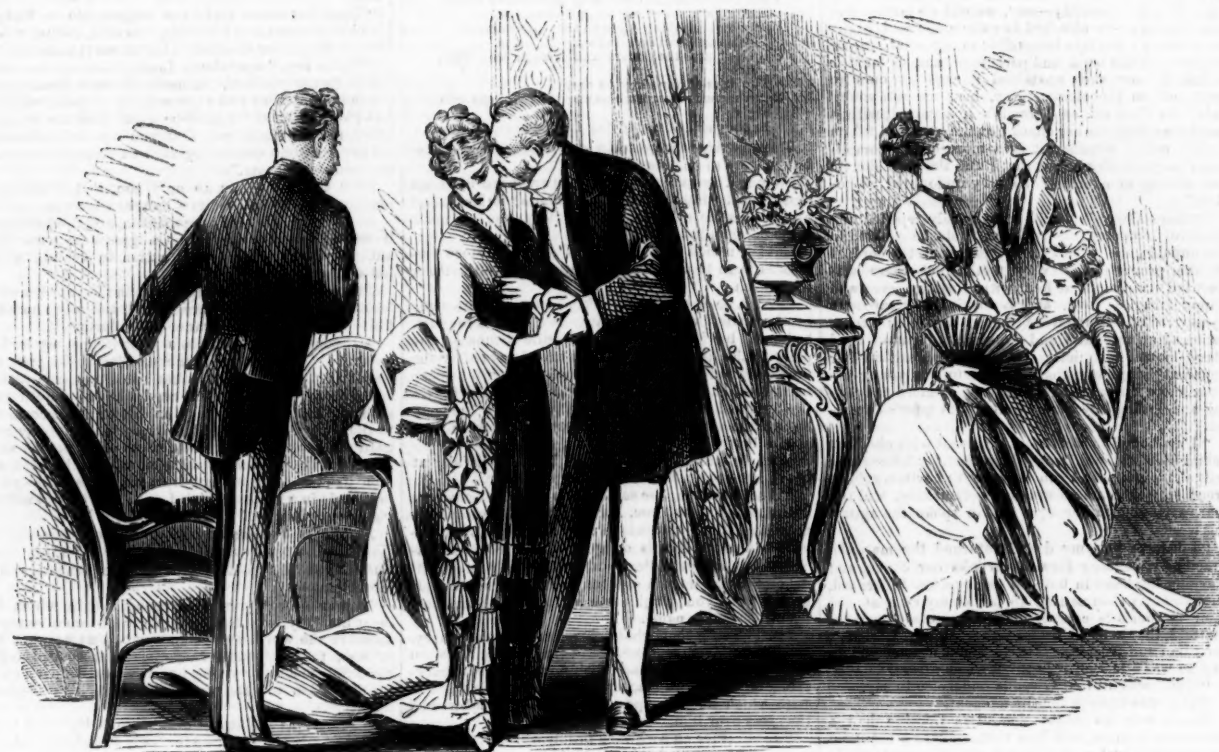
The others, however, were skilful to parry the slightest allusion, and so the visit passed off without any further annoyance.

Frank took his leave with a keen sense of satisfaction.

"I have found a pleasant home where I can visit and be received in friendliness," he said to himself. "Let the dark secrets between Terrace and Manor House remain where they are. I will not seek to drag them to the light from either side."

(To be continued.)





[A PATERNAL SALUTE.]

# THE DOUBLE BONDAGE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Lost Coronet," "Elgiva," etc., etc.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

One fatal remembrance, one sorrow that throws  
Its black shade alike o'er our joys or our woes;  
To which life nothing darker or brighter can  
bring;

For which joy has no balm and affliction no sting.  
Ah! this thought in the midst of enjoyment will  
stray,  
Like a dead, leafless branch in the summer's  
bright ray.

"LADY MAUD, I place myself at your disposal, here in the presence of your father and brother, both of whom are deeply interested alike in your happiness and in the result of your decision in a yet more personal respect."

Lord Saville spoke with the air rather of the envoy of a sovereign on business than of a suitor asking for the hand of a young and lovely maiden.

It was, in truth, receiving a proposal in public in royal fashion to hear his words, even though with a parent and a brother to witness the request thus calmly made.

There was little romance, and, it would seem, but little love in such a formal ceremony.

Lord Brunton looked anxiously at his daughter.

Perhaps the memory of his own youthful days, when his heart's love had been laid at the feet of the fair young girl who was his choice and pride returned to his mind. He perhaps recalled that scene—the warm blush, the faltering words of the mother of that young Maud now listening as if to some invitation from a dance partner rather than from an earnest suitor for her hand in a life-long marriage.

And it was perhaps a puzzle as well as a relief to watch the remarkable, inexplicable manner of the girl in her reply to the proposal thus calmly made.

No princess of the blood—no woman of at least twice her years could have maintained a more dignified and unyielding exterior than the Lady Maud Dorrington at the early age of seventeen, all new to the world and its ways.

"I am willing to obey my father's will, and in every way conform to the arrangements that have been made long since for my future, Lord Saville. I will do my duty, and trust to you as a gentleman and man of honour to perform yours."

Did Sholto blench? Did his eyelids fall for a brief instant under the calm, dignified candour of the young girl so many years his junior?

If it was so, the emotion was far too transitory to

be noted by the bystanders, and the next moment he replied, in his usual firm, decided tones:

"I shall not fear you or myself, Lady Maud. If Lord Brunton will entrust you to my care, I confidently expect that we shall be as happy as the ordinary run of couples in this domestic England of ours."

Perhaps the marquis shrank for a moment from consigning his child to so cold and unloving a bridegroom. Perhaps his first impulse might be to snatch her from the chill clasp that could but convey an ice-thrill to the breast of bride, or parent, or friend.

But the bond was too firm—the penalty too heavy for him to dare the bold step; and there could be no refuge for the young, inexperienced girl in the counsel or in the sanction of her nearest protector and friend.

"Then I will wish you joy. I must now look on you as my son-in-law elect, and at once publish the news and act upon it," said the marquis, with a real or affected gaiety in his air. "Maud, my darling, a father's best blessing attend you, for you are a good and dutiful child. And for you, Lord Saville, I can but assure you that nothing will be wanting to prove to you your welcome into our family and connexions. As to the jewel you have won, it is not for me to explain or extol its value," he added, in a tone of real emotion that might well go to the heart of a true and loving nature.

"I believe you—yes, from my very heart I believe you, my lord," returned Sholto, in firm, unflinching accents. "And I am flattered by the confidence you place in me."

There was a slight pause.

The hearts and brains of the four there present were busy with feelings and thoughts that were perhaps little suspected by each other.

The eldest of the party was the most transparent in his motives and his views, notwithstanding his mature years and experience.

But for Maud and Sholto, the newly-betrothed pair, a veil was drawn over every working of their minds, which only time could raise and reveal the secrets beneath.

Bernard was the first to break silence.

"Now that all this is happily settled," he observed, cheerily, "I may claim your promise, my dear father, on my own behalf. I cannot rest quietly when such happiness is in my very sight, and I am only waiting your sanction to grasp it for my own."

Lord Brunton coughed hesitatingly.

"Perhaps—yes, you are right, my boy," he said. "Only you are very much in a hurry. You will, of course, expect the fulfilment of my promise; only I thought it would be better for your sister's arrange-

ments to be completed first, and then your wishes might be carried out."

"Excuse me, my dear father, I thought the very reverse," observed Bernard, calmly. "It will be a very sensational thing for my engagement and Maud's to be announced simultaneously. And I will, by your permission, seek my own fair betrothed at once and gladden her heart by your sanction."

He left the room before Lord Brunton could reply, and in an incredibly short space of time he returned, with his mother on his arm, and a slighter, younger and fairer form sheltering herself behind the ample folds of the stately marchioness.

"Father, I have persuaded my gracious and kind mother to give her countenance to my wishes," said Lord Cranmore, with a bright and confident smile. "You will not let her plead in vain for her wilful son."

Lord Brunton turned to his wife with a smile that he only had for her.

"Is it really your desire, Helen? Are we to decide so quickly on the fate of our only son?"

There was perhaps a shade of sadness in the fine features of the marchioness that was not altogether indicative of bright, joyous satisfaction at the momentous events impending in her family. But still she did not hesitate in her answer.

"In some respects Bernard has judged well, my lord. In losing one daughter, we shall be thankful for another. More especially," she added, "since in this case we may fairly count on being able to retain her with us in no ordinary measure."

"You mean that your new daughter has my bride's place in affection and claims, Lady Brunton, is it so?" said Lord Saville, with a half-scornful, half-inquisitive smile.

"Perhaps," returned the marchioness. "However, in any case, my lord," she went on, turning to her husband, "we have scarcely one good and sufficient reason for objecting to our Bernard's choice. It is better—far better to give our sanction frankly, freely, and with a generous and hearty approval."

The marquis cleared his throat as he looked from Maud to Gwenda as the latter stood somewhat shrinking in the background, but still with a proud grace in her whole bearing, and her perfect features and skin displaying a yet more transparent and refined delicacy from her recent illness.

"There is, as usual, justice in what you say, my dear Helen," he said, after a pause. "Miss Loraine is beautiful and well-endowed, and, I am sure, will grace our family tree," he went on, with a gracious smile to Gwenda as he enumerated her claims. "At the same time," he continued, with a

more lofty air, "Miss Loraine is far too sensible not to be aware of the one drawback that is attached to her. She may possibly—nay, we will go farther and say probably—be attached to some noble and high-born family; but it is impossible to say what may be the truth of her birth and parentage, and so far it is a risk for any such unstained lineage as ours to graft her on the stock. Nay, hear me out, young lady," he went on, as Gwenda's lips parted, with a suspicious flush on her cheeks, at the remark. "You should rather consider it as a more entire compliment to your attractions that I and the marchioness are willing to overlook the very undoubted objection."

Perhaps Gwenda would have hastily rejected the doubtful compliment—perhaps, had she yielded to the impulse, she would have flung back the coronet in the proud peer's very teeth; but there was Bernard standing near her, with pleading eyes and happy looks of love, and Lord Saville's sarcastic eyes were calmly regarding her in inquiring expectation of an animated and impending dispute. And Maud looked so quietly composed and sad in her apparent happiness that it gave to the young orphan more courage to venture on a more promising and loving fate than awaited the peer's daughter.

"I am bound to receive your consent with obedient submission, my lord," she said, at last. "Time alone will show whether I can deserve it; I will try," she went on, her firmness well nigh vanishing, and the tears springing in her eyes as she spoke the agitating words.

"I believe you, my dear," returned the marquis, graciously, bending forward to kiss her cheek, and clasping her hand in both his as he spoke. "Bernard, the matter is then settled so far as my consent and your mother's is concerned, and as to all business matters, they will be transacted with Miss Loraine's guardian and trustee. I think I understood you to say he was a lawyer. Is it not so, my dear?"

"Yes," was all that Gwenda had voice to say. But it was enough for the moment.

There was no doubt that Miss Loraine had a handsome fortune, still less that she was a beautiful and graceful girl, and that his son was passionately in love with her past any hope of awakening him from the dream of ecstasy.

So the interview ended without farther arrangements.

Gwenda flew impatiently away in spite of Maud's half-entreaty to come with her to her rooms. She wanted to realize her new position, yet it was difficult to comprehend that the unknown, the nameless, was betrothed to the son of the proud marquis.

Had she known that it was to the felon's daughter that the consent had been given she would have been more hopelessly bewildered, more fearfully timid of the result.

Mrs. Fenton was quietly sitting in the corner of the apartment when she entered.

"Ah, my dear," she said, raising her eyes from her book, "I was longing to hear the result of the interview Lady Brunton wished for. Was it to send again for Doctor Ellis, or does she think you need more skilful advisers to complete your cure?"

Gwenda laughed a little sly, graceful laugh.

"Not exactly," she said. "That was not precisely the object of Lady Brunton's summons."

Mrs. Fenton's eyes had been apparently turned once more on the pages of her book, even during the girl's answer, but there was a furtive glance in her veiled lids that had more inquisitive penetration in it than a more direct and open inspection.

"Well, my dear, if you have no very great objection to inform me of the secret I am all interest and attention," she said, softly. "But though I am your chaperone and guardian I would not in any case intrude on your confidence, even when it is given to strangers."

Gwenda's warm heart was touched in an instant by the tacit reproach.

"Dear, kind Mrs. Fenton, do not look like that," she exclaimed. "Of course I was going to tell you; only it is so strange I can hardly believe it myself. I am engaged to Lord Cranmore."

"Engaged! and with Lady Brunton's sanction?" she asked, with a sudden flash of surprise.

"Yes, or I would never call it an engagement, never avow it as such," said the girl, proudly.

Mrs. Fenton gave a grave smile.

"A very splendid alliance, of course. I do not suppose Mr. Bolton will object, my dear, always granting that he has power to consent to marriage before you are of a certain and perfect age," she said, quietly. "You will, I presume, write to him at once, and I shall wait his orders as to our next movements before I even avow that I have any knowledge of the event to the marquis and his lady. Of course they look on me as a powerless if useful appanage to the heiress."

## CHAPTER XXV.

With thee were the dreams of my earliest love,  
Every thought of my reason was thus,  
In my last humble prayer to the Spirit above  
Thy name shall be mingled with mine.  
Oh, blest are the lovers and friends who shall live  
The days of thy glory to see,  
But the next dearest blessing that Heaven can give  
Is the pride of thus dying for thee.

The marriages were to be on the same day. The brides were to be dressed alike.

So much, and no more had been arranged by those most deeply interested in the coming brides, and every possible splendour and gaiety was to mark these ceremonies.

But the period was still unsettled when these festivities were to be solemnized by the binding rites of the church.

"Let it be at once, as quickly as the arrangements can be made," was Lord Cranmore's earnest request, as he and his father and Lord Saville discussed the point in the library some two or three days after the proposals had been made and accepted. "What can be the use of delay? You must know that it is a needless and most cruel waste of happiness," he went on, with the impetuous eagerness of a youthful and ardent lover.

Lord Brunton looked doubtfully and wisely at his future son-in-law.

"It seems to me," he said, "that the brides-elect are both too young, and you, Bernard, have so recently arrived at full age and manhood, that unless Lord Saville is anxious for his own domestic life to be commenced, it will be better to make at least some slight delay. What do you say, Sholto?" he went on, addressing the young nobleman for almost the first time by his Christian name.

Lord Saville somewhat winced under the query. His hand played nervously and doubtfully with an ivory paper-knife he had taken up from the library-table, and there was most needless energy in the zest with which he tore open a book. "Blackwood" that was near him.

"It is rather an awkward problem to refer to me, my lord," he replied, at last. "No one can suppose I should be slow in claiming such a bride," he went on, clearing away some choking impediment in his throat. "Still—"

"Still, you agree with me," interrupted the marquis, perceiving that he paused.

"In a measure—yes," replied the viscount, firmly. "I would not wish any of my past affairs to remain in an unsettled condition when I so completely change my mode of life. I am not quite like your son, Lord Brunton," he continued, with a forced smile. "Unfortunately a few more years have passed over my head, with all their wrappings of joy and sorrow."

There was a mingling of sadness and of bitter misery in his tone that few perhaps would have been content to pass unnoticed.

And even Lord Brunton with his pre-engrossed desires, and Bernard with his love-stricken fancy scarcely felt in their inner hearts that the manner and the tone were entirely satisfactory to the father and brother of Maud Dorrington. But they did not venture on any comment.

So far Sholto had them at his mercy, and only his honour and chivalry bound him to fulfil his bond as a noble, gentle-born nature should.

"May I ask what delay you propose?" said Bernard, seeing his father's mute hesitation.

"I can scarcely say positively," replied Lord Saville. "Perhaps three, perhaps six months would be necessary for the full completion of my purpose."

"Then," interposed Lord Brunton, quickly, "suppose we were to strike a medium between the periods, Saville. Let me see, this is September. It is quite out of my ideas to interfere with Christmas festivities by a wedding. Suppose we say February, what would that be, gallant bridegrooms?" he went on, with a faint attempt at jocular badinage.

"I daresay I can wind up all by that time," said Sholto, calmly. "And depend on it I will not lose any time in the business, Lord Brunton. The sooner all is concluded and the past is forgotten the better," he exclaimed, almost as if the words burst from him involuntarily.

Bernard's face fell as the fiat was thus given and re-echoed.

"I cannot see the necessity," he said. "Why not let the ceremonies be concluded and then all this wonderful performance be gone through? Gwenda is ready, there is no past life, no mysterious business to be concluded where she may be concerned. And it is rather hard lines for me to incur all the danger and irksomeness of suspense on account of all this remarkable necessity to close up old scores."

Perhaps it was a random shot. But in any case it told, for Sholto decidedly changed colour under the insinuation. But the next moment he gave a

haughty look of astonishment at the impetuous youth.

"I was not aware that I am accountable to Lady Maud's brother for my actions," he said, coldly. "So long as her father is satisfied I presume it is enough."

"True, true," exclaimed Lord Brunton, hastily. "You forget yourself, Bernard. I have been only too indulgent with you at present in all your wishes and plans. But there must be some limit to everything, and I promise you that you are but inducing me to repent my consent by such an unnecessary and unaccountable haste."

Lord Cranmore was an only son, and what was more, a petted one, despite a haughty temper.

And his father's peculiar condition, and the bondage it had entailed, crippled in a great measure the authority and the freedom of action in dealing with his son.

There was a scornful impatience in the young man's look during his father's admonition, and when he had finished the angry annoyance burst forth.

"Of course I am bound to submit to you, my lord," he said. "There is no other course left in the present instance. But I mean you that there may even yet be cause for repentance in this case. There is even yet a chance that the delay may be dangerous, according to the old proverb. And however little you may regard my happiness or wishes, those of my sister and Lord Saville may meet with more consideration at your hands. As it is the responsibility is entirely off my hands in a matter which I need scarcely recall to your remembrance."

And, with a haughty bow to the marquis and to Lord Saville, the young man left the room, his face flushed and his breast boiling with incipient rage and mortification.

It was no very promising condition in which to meet his lady-love, had Gwenda been more experienced in the world's ways and human nature, but as it was, the accidental rencontre that ensued only tended to touch her young heart with a deeper sense of obligation to such warm and more disinterested affection.

Gwenda was sitting in the elegant sitting-room that had been recently fitted up for Lady Maud, and shared by her with her old schoolfellow and future sister.

The drawing-pencil that she held, with the apparent intention of sketching the view from the window, was idly playing on the paper, while her eyes were bent, as it seemed, on vacancy. Yet there was a happy smile on her lips, and a bloom deepened from the maiden meditation—the sweet thoughts that played around her fancy. What had she done to be so blessed? She had received unlooked-for wealth, and she was about to secure with it the heart and companionship of one whose rank alone made the alliance eligible, and yet whom she had chosen freely from the world as her beloved—her idol. No wonder that her beauty was embellished by such thoughts, and that the soft girl-features had an almost unearthly and spiritual radiance from the well-spring of joy within.

No wonder that Bernard Cranmore stood and gazed at the fair vision ere he made his presence known and disturbed the illusion! But at last the lover's impatience for the reality overcame his admiration of the fair picture, and he advanced into the room, so quietly indeed that Gwenda was not aware of his advent till his arm was round her and his lips resting on her cheek.

She started away from his embrace with a half-shy, yet pleased look.

"Naughty Bernard, how dare you?"

"Say rather, how could my precious one expect that her devoted lover could remain so long away from her side?" said Lord Cranmore, repeating the venial offence with refined yet ardent warmth.

"Where is Maud? I thought she was with you," said Gwenda, extricating herself timidly from her lover's caress. "She only left me a few minutes since."

"I am glad of it. I wanted to see you alone," said Lord Cranmore, eagerly. "Gwenda, do you know that our wedding is deferred? I bring you what is evil news to me, at any rate."

The girl could not repress a slight start of surprise.

"Then is it that Lord Brunton disapproves?" she said, quickly.

"No, no, a thousand times no," was the reply. "But it is his fault—Lord Saville's, Gwenda. I do not like—I mistrust him," he went on, impetuously.

"Why should you?" she said, though a chill tremor seemed to run through her own frame at the ominous words. "If your sister can love him, if he is to be your near relative, what then? He has not offended you, dear Bernard?"

"Yes, he has," returned the young man, fiercely, "he has. If he had loved Maud as I do you, my darling, he would have caught eagerly at the first chance of calling her his own. But instead of that he has retired, hesitated, deferred it under pretext of business that must



be wound up ere he can manage to take to himself my sister for a bride," he added, sarcastically. "And my father has yielded to the proposal, and now we are to be the victims of this cold-hearted villain."

Gwendolene gave a half-feeble smile at this tremendous verdict on Sholto, even though her own heart did perhaps somewhat re-echo the disquietude of his. "Hush, Bernard," she said, with a pretty affectation of reproof. "You will frighten me altogether by such terrible indignation. Perhaps it will turn on me next," she added, archly, though a furtive smile rather contradicted the assertion.

"On you, dearest," he said, incredulously. "No, never, not so long as life lasts could I ever change to my beloved, my peerless one."

And the small hand was kissed even more passionately than before.

"Are you certain that you will never repent, dear Bernard?" she asked. "I would a hundred times rather you had never asked me, never allowed me to appear before the world as your betrothed, than that you should either disgrace me by retracting, or kill me by repenting your choice."

There was a new earnestness, a flash, even of despair in her features that had little in common with the girlish gaiety or the feminine softness that had but now given a charm to her face.

Bernard felt a strange uncomfortable annoyance at the new feature in the temperament of his betrothed. It had somewhat less of submissive dependence and gratitude than she had invariably displayed since their first child-love.

"You are almost as strange and tiresome as Lord Saville, Gwendolene," he exclaimed, impatiently.

Then as the tears sprang up in the lovely eyes, he suddenly retracted the harsh reproach, and again the whole gush of love burst out in his look and tone.

"Forgive me, dearest. It is this miserable man, this terrible disappointment that has fevered my brain and made me so cruelly unjust. No, no, believe me that my heart is yours and yours alone. That no possible circumstance could induce me to give you up. You will trust, you will be true to me, will you not, my love, even if you are tried by other and more brilliant suitors?"

"Can you doubt it?" she said. "Ah, Bernard, you may be tried, because I am not very great in birth, and your parents may be still unwilling you should marry a nameless bride. But for me it is only sunshine, happiness beyond compare to be your wife," she murmured, as he drew her toward him for a brief caress which sealed the reconciliation and the compact.

But the next moment the steps of the light and youthful Maud came bounding along the walk below the window, and Gwendolene darted away to hide the warm blushes upon her fair cheeks.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

Ne'er tell me of glories serenely adorning  
The close of our day, the calm eve of our night;  
Give me back—give me back the wild freshness  
Of morning,  
Her clouds and her tears are worth evening's  
best light.

"LAURA, my dear, I am going to give you a strong—ay, the strongest proof of my affection and care for you," said Count Albert, and as he spoke he laid his hand on the white wrist of his wife as it threw back the wide, hanging sleeve, in the weary heat of a sultry autumn day, which was increased by the atmosphere of a large, crowded Paris hotel.

"What is to be the wonderful test?" she asked, languidly, glancing up from her embroidery.

There was a decided difference in the looks and the demeanour of the countess since they had left Naples.

Her complexion was more delicate, her eyes had a more glittering, unnatural brightness, and the whole air was indicative of an irresistible and even painful languor, that was evidently more physical than mental to an experienced eye.

"What do you intend? What is it you wish?" she inquired, in the tone of one who has but little to know or to hope or fear.

"Well, it is this," he returned: "I do not think Paris suits you; your health appears so completely shattered and delicate. And yet I have business here that will render it necessary to remain some week or two; perhaps even a month—perhaps more."

Laura bowed her head carelessly.

It scarcely seemed to interest her; nothing did excite her now, since the departure from the sunny city.

"You have no concern in my movements—you do not care to hear more? Is it not so?" asked her husband, bitterly.

"It is not for me to say. I am content to be at your mercy," replied Laura, as if the words escaped her unconsciously.

The count gave a slight, quick start. The words

seemed to surprise him with a sudden thrill of distress and horror.

"I did not expect this, Laura. I thought at least you would trust me—that you would not be so cruelly unjust," he said, abruptly.

"Yes, yes, of course—I will—I do!" she said, wearily. "Only explain yourself. I am weak and tired, I suppose, for nothing interests me much now. Please forgive me if I was rude," she went on, coldly.

"That is a harsh word that I would never have dreamed of using. I only complained of what I dare say is but ill health," he replied, gently. "It is so hard for one whom I love best to regard all my movements with apathy. However, the simple thing I wanted to suggest to you was the prudence of your leaving this hot, unhealthy place before I can get away."

"If you wish it I am ready," she replied, quickly.

"Come, come! there is a little too much of this jargon of universal obedience," he said, impatiently.

"However, it is well enough in this case, since I have determined that it will be better for you to carry out my wishes," he went on. "And I will explain to you my intentions in a very few words; I think that if you go the short, easy journey to Rouen—it is a quiet and quaint old town, situated in a very pretty country that will afford you pleasant and amusing walks and rides—you could remain there for a short time, until either I am able to join you or send you word to proceed to England," he continued, as she sat with her large dark eyes fixed upon him, that might well read his very soul and disconcert his self-possession.

"Pardon me," she said, "I do not think I should wish to cross the Channel by myself."

"What you a coward! That is the last weakness I should have expected from Laura de Fontane," he rejoined, with a half-mocking smile.

"No, scarcely. I have no fear of winds and waves—would that human passions were as little to be dreaded!" she answered, calmly.

"Perhaps," he replied, "we may all join in that prayer, for we may all have suffered from the same griefs and disappointments. It is not for you, Laura, to turn on me when I am so entirely innocent of any but the kindest intentions towards you. And mark me, Laura, it is not altogether for want of comprehending the truth. I may, and do know much that I ignore, because I would give you every possible chance to preserve your own honour and my love." Laura did not reply.

Perhaps a slight shiver thrilled through her at the ominous words, but her blood was either too poor or too chilled to mantle up in her cheeks, as it would have done in earlier years.

"I will say no more," he went on. "Your own heart should tell you whether I am right or not in my ideas. It is more to the present purpose to inform you of my plans for you. Meriton will go with you, and he will be zealous enough in his attentions, you may be sure. And I have already arranged that you will have comfortable, I may say, very luxurious apartments there till I join you, when we will immediately proceed to England. I shall, you may be assured, lose no time in accomplishing my business," he went on, with a tender smile; "I shall count the hours till I rejoin my Laura."

He did but speak in vain.

She gave no answering response. Her thoughts seemed far away. At last she spoke in an absent tone.

"How long is it since you heard from England, Albert?"

"What a remarkable question. I have so many correspondents who send me letters from various parts that it would be rather difficult to decide what answer to give. I suppose you have some especial person in view, is it not so, Laura?" he answered, half-mockingly.

"Yes; it is but of little interest to me save on one account," she returned. "It is of Gwendolene I would speak. Her memory is ever in my breast. I can see her even now in all her child's beauty, that promised such rich development."

"Yes; very like her mother, I suppose, though I never had the pleasure of seeing the late Mrs. Lester," he answered, carelessly.

"It matters not. She is his child, and she was committed to my care. Oh, Albert! if you would but tell me of her, if you would but let me perform some part of my duty to her I would indeed bless your name!"

"Excuse me, my dear, if I request you to pay attention to my earnest request that that subject shall never more be named between us," he replied. "Gwendolene is cared for, safe, well, and as far as I know happy. Leave her in peace, and trust me for the rest!"

She was silent, for she had learned by this time the needlessness of contention when such peremptory commands were issued.

"When do you propose I should start for the north?" she asked at length.

"When? Oh, as soon as it is possible. Let me see. In three days from this time at farthest. I suppose there can be no difficulty, for I well know that your wardrobe is already most amply supplied, Laura. And all other arrangements being made, you have but to make any little purchases that may please you ere you leave Paris. Then the sooner you are off the better. I expect the change will be most beneficial to your health. The hills round Rouen are as breezy as any of the north-country mountains in your native land," he added, musingly.

"Yes, that will do. There will be no difficulty," she replied. "It can matter little, very little as to any such preparations as you speak of. I can dispense with needless ceremonies now, and remain in quiet and seclusion. I am content."

"But I should not be," he replied. "I should be absolutely horrified to let my beautiful Laura be hidden in seclusion, instead of shining, as she ought, the star of the firmament. But when your health is restored all these gloomy ideas will be dissipated. And now, as we understand each other so well, we will drop the subject and go to more pleasant and lively topics, if it suits you. Will you go with me to the Vaudeville to-night?"

And with some such indifferent talk he tried to divert his wife's mind from the immediate subject he had brought before her.

Laura did not refuse to respond to the attempt, but her manner was abstracted and cold, and before long the count rose and left the apartment, and she was once more at peace.

"Madam, will you not be persuaded to drive to the top of yonder hill?" said Meriton, on the morning after their arrival in the quaint old town of Rouen. "There is a fine view from the summit, and there is an extraordinary church built at the top called Notre Dame de Bon Secours, that I am sure you will like to see."

The page was standing with his eyes gazing from the window to the distant view as he spoke, and the countess followed the direction they took to the hill, where a faint outline of the chapel could be distinguished.

"As you will. It may be an object," she said, carelessly. "Order the carriage, if you like. I will be ready in half an hour."

It was a pretty drive through the lanes and up that winding, gradual ascent to that celebrated eminence.

It reminded Laura of her own native land more than anything she had seen since she quitted England.

And as she lay back in the carriage her mind reverted to those days of her youth that had perhaps been happy, and on which she, at any rate, looked back with envy and regret.

There was innocence in their retrospect—there was a brightness in the vista, which did but make the present appear dull in comparison. And it was almost with a sudden start that she found the carriage stopped, and the page at her side.

"Will you alight, madam? The church is very well worth seeing. It is considered quite a gem of art by many persons."

She consented, and in a few minutes was standing within the glittering chapel, with its columns of green and yellow and red and blue glowing in every part and dazzling the eye with their brightness.

Laura was at last attracted by its novelty and sat down for a few minutes to gaze around, and watch the various objects which at first sight were scarcely visible in the new, half-obscure light.

There was an old woman placing and lighting candles for some especial prayer she was putting up to the Virgin, there was a priest at the side altar. And the only other living being was half-concealed from her by his position and by one of the pillars near which he was standing.

But still, either from that circumstance, or some idle fancy, Laura's eyes were fixed on its movements with a remarkable interest. She longed for him to turn round—to come more in the light that she might see his face.

The curiosity was rather that of a person who sees another wearing a mask than a more rational and consistent interest.

Laura half-dispensed herself for its folly, and yet she could not subdue the fancy that prompted her to remain fixed to the spot till she could distinguish the features of the stranger, and felt a tantalized impatience at the delay.

But though minute after minute went on and the figure moved deliberately from spot to spot and still with his face turned from her, she remained seated in the same place, where he could not help passing in order to make his exit from the chapel.

The suspense came to an end at last.

The figure turned slowly, partially, so that the profile was gradually revealed.

Laura's heart beat fearfully. The blood seemed

mounting up to her brow in a warm scarlet tide. Her hands were clasped till the very nails dug into the flesh through the delicate gloves.

Should she hide herself or fly?—should she avoid—should she boldly assert the courage of innocence and remain to encounter the danger, the grief, and, alas! the joy of meeting once again, alone and in freedom, Sholto, Lord Saville?

(To be continued.)

### THE LOST WILL.

Two persons sat together in a first-floor room fronting a street in a thriving little city. The afternoon sky was gray, cold and dull; and the room was grayer, colder, duller, than the sky; everything about the place looked sordid and neglected. The rain-channelled dust of years had crusted on the windows. The dead boxes on the shelves behind the door, the musty books in the book-case opposite the fireplace, the yellow map that hung over the mantelpiece, were all thickly covered with dust and cobwebs.

It was the private room of Lawrence Haight, attorney at law, and it opened out from a still drearier office, in which a clerk was hard at work. There was a clock in each room, and a calendar on each mantelpiece. The hands of both clocks pointed to half-past three, and the calendars both proclaimed that it was the second day of June, eighteen hundred and sixty-two.

The two persons sitting together in the chamber were the lawyer and his wealthy old father-in-law, Mr. Jacob Osdell.

Mr. Haight had placed his chair with the back to the window, so that his features were scarcely distinguishable in the gathering gloom of the afternoon. His visitor—a stout, pale man with a forest of iron-gray hair about his temples—sat opposite, with the light full upon his face, and his hand crossed on the knob of his cane.

"I have come to talk to you, Lawrence," said he, "about George Crawford."

"About George Crawford?" repeated the lawyer.

"Yes—I think I have been too hard with him. I intend that he and Lucy shall come back to the old home."

"Ah, you don't say so! Upon what terms, Mr. Osdell?"

"Upon no other terms than that they shall be son and daughter to me. You see, Lawrence, I am growing old, and my home is a very lonely one now that you have taken my only other child."

Haight shifted around a little farther from the light, and looked up with a keen, inquiring glance.

"You have forgiven them, eh?"

"Yes; fully and freely."

"Do they know it?"

"No. I shall go to them to-morrow."

"I have no objections to offer now, Mr. Osdell; and I see you would not listen to them, if I had. But I am sure you would regret this determination. Why, it is scarcely a year since you were heaping the most vindictive curses upon their ungrateful heads."

"Yes, that is so, Lawrence. I had cherished high hopes of Lucy's making a brilliant match, and the plans of a lifetime were upset when she married Crawford; but, after all, there is nothing against him save his poverty."

"And I should say that that was a very great deal, Mr. Osdell."

"At any rate, it is a fault easily remedied, Lawrence. I gave you five thousand pounds last week to invest for me. I now countermand the order, and will call next week for the money. I shall give them that at once."

Lawrence Haight's hand trembled like an aspen leaf as he placed it to his burning forehead. A moment passed before he could command his voice to reply, and there was a tremor in it then, in spite of him.

"You are too wise a man, I am sure, Mr. Osdell," said he, "to act in this rash manner."

"And you are too wise, I am sure, Lawrence, not to know that a man should never attempt to do right by halves. No, I am not acting rashly. I have but two children—your wife and Lucy. To you I have given thousands, to her not a penny. You surely should not complain if I repair the injury I have done them."

As he said this the old man rose to his feet and turned toward the door. His hand was on the latch when Haight stopped him.

"What about the will you left in my charge?" he asked.

"The will! Oh, yes; that must be altered, of course."

"When?"

"As soon as I come back from Crawford's."

"All right, sir. Good evening."

"Good evening, Lawrence."

The lawyer ushered his visitor through the outer office, listened a moment to his heavy footfall going down the street, hastened back to his private room, and shut the door.

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed he, in a low, agitated tone, "what's to be done now? This is ruin—ruin!"

He took three or four restless turns about the room, then flung himself into his chair, and buried his face in his hands.

"He thinks I am rich," he muttered. "I a rich man, indeed! Why, even the five thousand pounds are gone with the rest! Merciful powers! what can I do? To whom can I turn for it? What security have I to give? Only a week's notice, too. I am lost! I am lost!"

Again he arose and strode rapidly up and down the room. Gradually the trouble deepened and deepened on his face, and his cheeks grew deathly pale.

"There is one way out of it!" he groaned. "Bill Davis could—must I do that?"

He sank down into his chair, rested his chin upon his open palms, and fell into a deep and silent train of thought.

In a little while he sprang up again, seized his hat, and hastened out into the street. On leaving the house he directed his steps towards a portion of the city notorious as the abode of crime and infamy.

He walked rapidly, with the firm, swift step of a man full of determination. Soon he struck into a street where everything bore the mark of corruption and decay. Houses with unglazed sashes, unbiinged doors, roofless and crumbling away beneath the hand of time, were leaning against each other, to support themselves amid the universal ruin. Crowds of miserable objects, the wrecks of human beings, were loitering about the dismal holes which they called their homes; some, shivering on the footway, were nestling closely together to protect themselves from the chill night air; some, bloated and half-stupefied with hard drinking, went muttering along, or stopped to brawl with others like themselves. Young females, too, with hollow cheeks and hungry eyes, were loitering among the herd. Many of them had been born to nothing better; but there were those among the number who once had friends who loved them, and had looked forward to a future without a shadow. And they had come to this! They had broken the hearts of those who would have cherished them, and had drunk of crime and woe to the dregs.

Haight shuddered as he hurried through this gloomy spot. Stifled screams and groans and sounds of anger and blasphemy burst upon his ears, mingled with shouts of mirth; and he observed figures shrinking in the obscure corners of the buildings as he passed, and watching him with the cautious yet savage eye of mingled suspicion and fear; for he was in the very heart of the region where thieves and cut-throats were skulking to avoid the vigilance of the police, and had common lot with the peniless and homeless who came there only to die. With a feeling of relief he emerged from this doomed spot, and came to a more quiet street.

It was growing late in the night when he at last came to a mean-looking house, having a small sign over the door, indicating that it was a tavern, and with a number of illuminated placards in the windows, intimating that lodgings were to be had, and that various liquors might be purchased at the moderate sum of sixpence.

Haight pushed roughly past two or three persons, and entered a dingy room, strongly impregnated with the fumes of tobacco and spirits, and enveloped in a cloud of smoke. It was filled with persons who looked as if they would not hesitate to ease a pocket, or, if it were necessary, to extend their civility so far as to cut a throat. Some were savage, silent and sullen; others, under the influence of what they had drunk, were humorous and loquacious; some, steeped in intoxication, were lying at full length upon benches; others were leaning back in their chairs against the wall, saying nothing, but blowing out clouds of tobacco smoke. In the midst of this disorderly throng sat the proprietor, keeping guard over rows of shelves occupied by a small congregation of decanters.

The lawyer walked around the room, staring into each man's face, and then approached the landlord.

"I don't see Davis. Is he there?" asked he of that personage, nodding his head at the same time toward an inner chamber.

"No; he's upstairs," was the answer.

"Alone?"

"I believe so. He took some brandy and a candle, and went off."

"Does he stop here to-night?"

"If he pays first, he can."

Haight left the room, and, ascending a narrow staircase, with which he seemed familiar, came to a dark passage. A light shining from beneath a door at the farther end of it guided him to the room that he sought, which he entered without ceremony.

Seated at a table, smoking and drinking, was a

red-eyed, bloated-faced man of about forty, dressed in a ragged suit, the coat of which was buttoned closely up to the throat, to conceal the want of a shirt. As the lawyer entered, he looked up; then pushing back his chair, came forward and extended his hand.

"How are you, sir?"

Haight, without noticing the extended hand, drew a chair to the table, and sat down.

"I came to see you on business," said he.

"Ah! what is it?"

"Who's in the next room?"

"I don't know. It's empty, I believe."

"Go and see, and look in all the rooms."

Davis, taking the light, went out, and presently returning, reported that all the rooms were empty. He then drew a chair directly in front of Haight, and, placing a hand on each knee, looked in his face.

"Can you keep a secret, Davis?" asked the lawyer, looking full into two eyes that never blenched.

"Can't you tell? You ought to be able to."

"Will you swear?"

"Yes, out with it! I'll keep a close mouth."

"Well, then," continued Haight, watching him sharply, to see the effect produced by his communication, and speaking in a whisper, "suppose you owed a man five thousand pounds, and no man knew of the debt but you two, what would you do?"

"I'd kill the creditor before morning," was the reply.

"What if you were paid to do that very thing? Would you do it?"

"What is the pay?"

"A hundred pounds."

"I'll do it!"

"And your nerves won't fail?"

"Never fear that."

Leaning forward in his chair, and speaking in a still lower tone, the lawyer now poured all his plans into the ruffian's ear. An hour passed by, and then he arose to go.

"Mind, now," said he, "he will leave at half-past ten to-morrow."

"All right, I'll be ready."

"Here's ten pounds; I suppose you are 'broke'?"

"I always am," was the reply.

Haight handed him the money, and, leaving the house, hurried off toward his own home.

The early morning stage drew up in front of the "Eagle" hotel, just as Mr. Osdell awoke from a long, deep sleep. He opened his eyes, and heard the stage horn, both at the same instant of time. His determination to do an act of charity and justice to his injured child had filled his whole being with the warm glow of happiness and peace, and he had slept the sleep of the just.

He sprang out of bed, when he heard the blowing of the horn, and began to prepare for his journey. While he is doing so, it is necessary that we should go back a little way into his past history.

To the majority of persons, Jacob Osdell was simply a rich, gentlemanly, "clever-looking" man. Even his clerks, who saw him daily for three hundred and thirteen dreary days in every dreary year, had no more notion of their employer's inner life than the veriest stranger who brushed past him in the street. They saw him only as others saw him, and thought of him only as others thought of him.

They knew that he had a profound and extensive knowledge of his business, an iron will, and an inexhaustible reserve of energy. They knew that he had two daughters, that he was a widower and rich, and this was all they did know.

One of his daughters had been married, long ago, to the wealthy and rising young lawyer, Lawrence Haight. The other remained at home with her father, and became his darling and pet.

A year before the time when our story commences, this daughter had met George Crawford, who was one of her father's most trusted clerks. They had loved each other from that moment. When the knowledge of this fact came to the old gentleman, he had raged and stormed in the most outrageous manner. He at once dismissed George from his employment, and threatened Lucy with the direst vengeance if she persisted in her "folly."

All to no purpose, however, were the old man's threats and anger. At the first opportunity, Lucy left his house, and she and George were made man and wife.

From that day forward Jacob Osdell never mentioned their names. He made his will, leaving to Mrs. Haight all his property except the house in which he lived. This alone out of his great wealth he gave to Lucy.

This will he placed in Lawrence Haight's hands with the injunction that it should be opened immediately after his death, and before his body should be consigned to the grave.



Month after month he had been nursing his wrath to keep it warm, but it had grown cool, cold, colder, in spite of him. His heart yearned for his darling and pet, and refused to be comforted.

Finally the news came to him that a little child had been born to Lucy, and that she had given it his name. Then all his anger left him, and he determined to take her to his heart and home again as we have seen.

Crawford lived in a snug little cottage a few miles from the city and it was thither that Mr. Osdell was about to journey by the coach that stood waiting at the door.

In a few moments he came to the bar to pay his bill.

"Are there any other passengers?" said he to the landlord.

"Yes, there is!" was the reply. "And an owdacious character he is too, I think."

"Why, what kind of a man do you take him to be? Not a highwayman, I hope, landlord?"

"Was not all that, sir; but then I only suspects."

"What do you suspect?"

The man adjusted his collar, and looked impressively into Mr. Osdell's face.

"I suspects a great deal—a very great deal!" said he, with an ominous shake of the head. "He's a murderin' raskil—I know it by a sign that never fails."

Mr. Osdell was not a nervous man, and therefore was not at all alarmed at this communication.

"Was is your sign?" he laughingly asked.

"The sign," replied the landlord, confidently, "I know it by the cut of his eye."

"The what?"

"The cut of his eye," reiterated the landlord, positively, "Let me get the cut of a man's eye, and I knows him at once. And I warn you, sir, to look out for that man. He's a murderin' raskil!"

After the coach had started, and was well on its way, Mr. Osdell looked up at his fellow passenger, and endeavoured to ascertain the mysterious "cut of the eye" for himself. The man before him was banded up in a huge overcoat, and his hat was pulled down over a face which was not the most prepossessing in the world, and whose natural deficiencies were not at all diminished by the lack of a very recent application of either water or razor.

He coolly bore the scrutiny of his features, and never for an instant turned away his glance from the face of Mr. Osdell.

"Well," said he, growing weary at last, "I'm a beauty, ain't I?"

"I beg your pardon, sir," replied Mr. Osdell, somewhat disconcerted at this remark, "I mean no offence, I assure you."

"Oh! you didn't, didn't you? Well, don't do it again, that's all!"

"I certainly shall not, sir; I have no wish to offend you."

"No; you had better not. I've had enough of your impudence; and if you give me any more, I'll—"

"You'll what?"

"I'll that," said the man, opening his vest and touching the handle of a dirk. His eyes flashed from their dark caverns with sullen ferocity, like those of an hyena. "Yes, that!" he continued. "Do you understand now?"

Evidently the man for some reason wished to quarrel with him; and Mr. Osdell, seeing this, and believing him to be drunk or crazy, restrained himself, and, as calmly as he could, said:

"Put up your knife, sir; you shall have no occasion to use it. And, besides that, to use it would be murder, and the punishment of that, I believe, is death."

The brow of the villain darkened, and his eyes flashed fire. He leaned forward and fingered his knife as though about to use it. On reflection, however, he seemed to have made up his mind to another course; and buttoning up his vest, he muttered a fearful oath, and cast himself back into a corner of the coach.

While after mile was now passed in utter silence, and soon the little village came into view. To Mr. Osdell's great relief, his early companion now stopped the coach, and sprang out into the road.

Without uttering a word, he crossed over to the bordering fence, sprang over it, and struck into a little path that led across the fields.

It was just growing dark as Mr. Osdell started out on the road that led from the village to George Crawford's house. It was but a short walk of a mile, and he was too impatient to wait till morning. Thoughts of the conversation he had had with the landlord, in the city, and the subsequent meeting with the rough passenger in the stage coach, almost deterred him. But there was no one, that he knew of, who had cause to injure him—the ruffian must have been mad to threaten his life; and, at any rate, he had long ago disappeared. No; there was no danger that he could see, and so he strode along cheerily.

Absorbed in thought as he was, however, Mr. Osdell paused every now and then to reconnoitre the country around him. The village was now some distance behind, and on no other side of him were there any buildings in sight.

Presently he came to an abrupt curve in the road.

He had been looking forward to this point for some minutes, and felt so sure that it must bring him in sight of Crawford's house that he was much disappointed to find all forward view cut off by a huge boulder that jutting out nearly across the road, a few yards ahead of him.

Instead of following the path, which wound for a considerable distance around the rock, Mr. Osdell sprang over the adjoining fence, and took a nearer cut across the field. When he reached the road again, he turned and looked back.

Indistinctly, through the fast gathering gloom of the evening, he could see a human face peering after him, around the corner of the rock nearest the roadway. The sight alarmed him exceedingly. Could it be possible that a man had been lying in wait for him, and that his life had only been saved by his lucky choice of roads? It was very probable; and the thought of it made him hasten on now as rapidly as he could. After he had proceeded a short distance, a thought struck him, and he sprang to one side, with a rapid movement, and concealed himself behind a large stump, standing in one of the fence-corners.

Presently he heard a footstep coming along the road—a footstep so light and swift that he thought his ears must have deceived him. But it soon grew more distinct, came near, nearer, and then passed swiftly by. Looking up from his place of concealment, Mr. Osdell saw his fellow passenger of the morning.

He was convinced, now, that the man had been waiting for him at the rock; was even now in pursuit of him. What was he to do? It was all dark to him, but plainly he must go on now to his journey's end. The man would soon miss him, would turn and follow him. Yes; he must go on and take the risks.

He was now but a short distance from Crawford's house; a little way up the road he could plainly see the white fence around it, and the trees in the yard. He hastened on, hoping to get so close to the house that his voice would be heard before the man should discover him again.

He was within twenty feet of the garden gate, when a dark form swooped down upon him from the side of the road, as swift as a panther, and dealt him a short, powerful blow that sent him reeling to the earth. It was done so quickly that there had been no time for even a scream. A knife glistened a moment in the air, descended, and Bill Davis had earned his hundred pounds.

The next morning George Crawford saw a sight at his very gate that made his blood run cold. There, before him, in the mud, lay his father-in-law, old Jacob Osdell. Beside the body, apparently dropped by a robber while searching for money, lay a small strip of paper. On it were these words, in Jacob Osdell's handwriting:

"I have this day made a will in revocation of the one in Haight's possession. June 2, 1862."

Far and wide rang the news of that fearful murder. Men stopped each other to talk of it in the crowded streets of the city, and women in the country gossiped over it at their firesides until they drove the blood from their own cheeks. From morning till night hundreds loitered about the blood-stained spot, gazing at the crimson earth with that mixture of apprehension and delight which go hand in hand so strangely.

The police took the matter in hand. They went to the spot and examined it; overhauled the paper that had been found, winked their eyes solemnly at the knife, which still lay on the ground, shook their heads and made profound remarks to each other in a tone which struck peculiar awe to the hearts of three small boys who had followed at their heels. After making voluminous notes they went back to the city, and immediately arrested a man who had no more to do with the crime than an unborn babe.

Soon the wonder grew stale; it gradually melted away, and in a year was entirely forgotten.

The only will that could be found was the one in Haight's possession, and consequently it was at once admitted to probate. Under it the lawyer took possession of all Osdell's property except the house that had been given to Crawford.

Ten years had passed away since the murder, and in all that time George Crawford had never ceased his search for the will mentioned in the slip of paper found near Jacob Osdell's body. He was confident his father-in-law had made a will in his favour, but where was it? He had thoroughly ransacked the old house that had been given him, from garret to cellar,

but without avail. The old desk in which Osdell usually kept his papers had been almost broken up in the search, but nothing came of it.

Lawrence Haight had heard of the memorandum discovered on the morning after the murder, and he too believed in the existence of the will. He had supposed, however, that as the conversation between himself and Osdell had been a private one, no one knew of the old man's intentions regarding George Crawford, and that therefore no search was being made for the missing document.

Within the last few days, he had discovered that such search was being made by Crawford. He was satisfied that the will was somewhere in the old house, and therefore the news that Crawford was poking into all its old nooks and crannies gave him great alarm. Somehow this search must be stopped; but how to do it he could not tell.

He sat in his office till long after dark, pondering this question. Were the trouble and worry of this thing never to end? The dearest scheme of his heart had succeeded; he had been saved from ruin; and now was a rich man—enormously rich—and yet he was not happy.

Davis had tormented the life out of him for hush-money, and now had come this new difficulty. What if the will were found? What if it led to revelations of the motive for murder? What if he were obliged to appear as a felon at the bar?

He felt but too truly that his life had been such as to repel all sympathy, and to gather about his path only those who would rejoice at his downfall.

"Imprisonment! disgrace! a convict! a convict!" muttered he. "No, never! There shall be more murders first!"

Man does not become a fiend at once. He does not burst into the world a criminal, with a heart of stone, a conscience seared, feelings dead, and affections withered at the root. These are the work of years; the result of a long struggle. All that is great and good in the soul battles to the last, before it yields its purity; and when it is crushed the man bears marks and brands that never leave him while life lasts.

Lawrence Haight had passed through the fiery ordeal, and came out of it callous to crime, ready for another murder, but with a heart teeming with vague fears. The dread of this search for the will made him shiver with fear. Tormented with thousands of forebodings of ill, he could neither reason nor think.

As he sat brooding over the news he had received there came a knock at the door.

"Who's there?" he demanded.

"Come and see," replied a harsh voice from without.

"It's you, Davis, is it?" said he, in an altered tone.

At the same time he unlocked the door and admitted the burly form of a man, with his hat slouched down over his eyes. His face was pale and haggard, and his eyes swollen and red.

"You are the very man I wanted," said the lawyer, as he came in, at the same time locking the door.

Davis strode up to the fire and extended his hands to the flame.

"Put on more coal," he said. "I'm freezing; and I guess you have made enough out of me to keep me warm, haven't you?"

"I'm afraid it will all be taken away again, Davis," said Haight, as he heaped on the coal.

"How? What do you mean?"

"Why, that Crawford is searching for the will."

"Oh, he's been doing that for ten years, hasn't he?"

"Not that I know of; but it doesn't matter—he's got to be stopped."

"Look here, I've never murdered but one man, and I'll never murder another—unless it be you for tempting me that time. Is it murder you mean?"

"Not so loud, Davis; not so loud," whispered the lawyer, in alarm. "Can't you suggest something? I don't care what it is."

Davis thought over the matter for a few moments, and finally said:

"I've got a plan that I think will work, but I must be paid."

"I'll give you anything you want if you succeed."

"Well, then, my plan is this: Crawford is poor, and wants boards. He doesn't know me, and so I'll go there to-morrow as a boarder. I'll help to search for the will, you know! Ha! ha!"

"If you bring me that paper, Bill, you shall have a thousand pounds."

"All right, I'm your man. I'll go to-morrow."

It was on this very night that George Crawford and his wife were sitting by a blazing fire, in their large old parlour, listening to the storm that was raging without, and busily concocting a plan for one more final and thorough search for the lost will.

Times had grown hard with them, and, during the

last winter, George had been out of employment altogether. Their last pound was fast being reached, and their only hope now was in finding the long-sought-for paper.

"I think it must be in that old desk in the garret," said George. "It was there he kept all his papers; and he was seen there writing a short time before he started on that last journey."

"It seems strange, George, very strange," replied his wife. "It is a mystery I cannot fathom."

"Well, I'll tell you, Lucy. I'll—Hark! What was that?"

A violent gust of wind rushed around the old house, rattled the shingles on the roof, and poured down the garret stairs with a wild, moaning, ghastly sound. It died away in the distance, and was immediately followed by a sudden, startling crash up in the garret loft.

George sprang to his feet, and his wife clung in terror to his arm. They listened a moment, but the sound was not repeated.

Taking up one of the lamps, George, followed by Lucy, who was too much terrified to remain alone, stepped out into the hall, and began to grope his way up the staircase. They went warily up and entered the huge garret, George holding the light aloft, and looking from right to left for the cause of the crash.

It was a weird old place by lamplight; an immense space, divided only by huge arches that supported the roof, and filled with old lumber and worn-out furniture. There were holes in the floor where rats skulked, and holes in the loft where pigeons built their nests, flying in and out of the broken window panes.

Nothing, however, seemed to have been disturbed until they reached the other end of the room. There something lay in a heap of ruins.

"That's what did it," said George, as the light revealed the old desk.

It had been tipped back against the wall, as it had but two legs, and the wind had overbalanced it.

Handing Lucy the light, George stooped down to raise the splintered lid. As he did so a little concealed drawer was revealed. With a trembling hand he opened it, and there before him lay the long-lost will.

"Eureka!" cried he, as he drew it forth. "Lucy, we have found it at last!"

They carried it down to the fire, and examined it. It took some time to decipher the contents, for the ink was somewhat faded; but the first lines were sufficient.

"I give and bequeath to Lucy Crawford the bulk of all the property of which I may die possessed; subject, etc."

Here followed a large legacy to Lawrence Haight. When morning came, the good news spread far and wide.

That night, the lawyer did not go home. He was waiting to hear some news from Davis as to the result of his little stratagem. He had grown rapidly older within the last few days. His face was haggard; his temples sunken, and he twisted his fingers together with a kind of childish helplessness.

He drew his chair closer to the fire, and stirred up the dying coals, for he was beginning to be chilly, and felt that if there were a blaze he would be less lonely. He coughed loudly, too, and rattled the poker against the bars of the grate; for there was something in the dead silence that made him shudder. But even the noise frightened him, so shaken were his nerves. He tried to laugh off his fears as ridiculous, and he threw himself back in his chair and laughed aloud.

If ever mortal man felt the agony of terror, he did; for at that moment his laugh was echoed from the outer office.

Crouching back in his chair, with his heart beating fast and hard, and gasping for breath, his hair bristling, he sat watching the door. He heard a slight motion, like a sliding, creeping step. It stopped. Then it came again, and nearer; then a hand touched the knob, turned it, opened the door, a giant figure stole cautiously in.

With a feeling partly of horror, and partly of relief, Haight sprang to his feet as the light revealed to him the ghastly features of Davis.

"Davis!" exclaimed he.

"That's me!" said the man, looking vacantly about him. "I wonder where Osdell is?"

"Osdell!" exclaimed the lawyer, staring at him.

"Why, you should know. He's dead long ago."

Davis had heard the news of the finding of the will, and to his mind, already half crazed with liquor, the discovery of the perpetrator of the murder seemed now to be certain. The awful dread of this had made of him a raving maniac. Instinctively he had made his way to Haight's office.

"Dead! Then who murdered him?" he cried, advancing on the lawyer. "You did it? You—ha! have I found you?"

He clutched the lawyer in his vice-like grip.

"Huzza! huzza!" shouted he, dashing his hand in his bosom, and drawing out a large knife.

"Heaven proteet me!" exclaimed Haight, struggling to get loose. "Help! help!"

Now, however, Davis was ungovernable. He sprang upon the lawyer, and bore him to the floor; but Haight was a muscular man, and, driven to desperation, he struggled fiercely. He threw Davis from him, and, although wounded, contrived to get to his feet and grasp the iron poker. This, however, offered but slight resistance to the maniac. Regardless of blows he dashed in upon the lawyer, and drove the knife to the hilt in his heart.

In the morning, when the officers of the law, accompanied by George Crawford, entered the lawyer's office to arrest him, they saw a fearful sight. On the floor in front of them, stone dead, was Haight; and, crouching at his side, like a wild beast, was an object which seemed scarcely human; it was the maniac murderer, Bill Davis.

There was now no need of a legal controversy about the will. A higher Power than any human tribunal had settled the matter. Jacob Osdell's property went at last to the man to whom he had willed it on that bright June day, ten years ago.

J. E. P.

#### WINDOW GARDENING.

This is an especially appropriate season of the year to make the windows beautiful with plants. There is great pleasure in bringing spring indoors by collecting the flowers which are in bloom in the hothouse, and planting them in the handsome boxes or baskets made for that purpose. Window gardening is delightful in winter time; nevertheless the hardiest plants suffer more or less for fresh air. At this time there are hours at noon when the windows can be thrown open, and the plants which have been housed in greenhouses will apparently speak their thanks for the drink of fresh air and the contact with the sun's rays. Shallow cigar boxes are very useful for planting seeds, and can be arranged to look nicely in the windows. It is time to plant mignonette and sweet alyssum, those fragrant and most suitable plants for window boxes. Seeds should also be put in the hanging baskets. The exquisite loveliness of the rose will not permit it to be omitted from the window garden, notwithstanding it is with difficulty kept in a thriving condition. Tea and China roses are the best adapted for culture in boxes.

For keeping plants healthy which are indoors at this season, close the windows of their room by three o'clock. Great attention must be paid to their cleanliness to promote their rapid growth. Flower-pots need washing on the outside weekly. Never leave water standing in the saucers of the flower-pots. Water must be given to the plants plentifully in these spring months. Rain water is always best for vegetation. Stimulate plants once a week with liquid manure. A large sponge is good for a watering-pot for house plants.

ALL the officers who have served in the Ashantee war will receive four months' leave of absence, and all the privates one month. The prize money to be distributed among the soldiers will amount to the handsome sum of 7s. 6d. per man.

THERE is a yew tree at Wrexham which is renowned for its longevity, and is worthy of Mr. Thom's attention. It is more than sixty feet high, and is supposed to be about 1,450 years old, planted in the year 426, when the Romans finally left Britain, Wales being at that time a Roman province. Both the old sexton and the former churchwarden give a similar account respecting this tree—and they ought to remember all about it.

RESEARCH AMONG THE PLANETS.—Thirty-seven small planets have been discovered in the years 1872 and 1873, or 18½ in each year, making 1,850 per century. From the days of Hipparchus to the present time we may reckon 2,000 years; had astronomers worked with the same zeal and success during these 2,000 years, the number of small planets known would have amounted to 37,000, only three times the number given by Arago of stars up to the 7th magnitude, and a very small proportion of the stars of the 10th magnitude.

A LOST POPULATION.—About a thousand years ago a colony of Icelanders was planted on the western coast of Greenland. They were hardy people, inured to cold and meagre living, and there seemed to be no reason why they should not take root in the frozen soil of their new home. They built a stone church there, and stone houses to live in, of which the ruins are still to be seen. But what became of the builders is a question that has never been solved, and never will be. They vanished from the face of the earth, and that is all that is known.

Whether cold or pestilence or starvation took them off, or whether wandering savages killed them, no man can tell. Their settlement is known in history as Lost Greenland.

NEGATIVE KINDNESS.—Do the doctors know that half the wives in the world die of this complaint? "He never spoke an unkind word to his wife." Yes, but did he remember, now and then, to speak a kind one? Did he have any sympathy for her bodily or mental ills? Or was he blind and deaf to both, treating them with that cutting indifference which in time chills the most loving heart, and silences its throbs for ever? Men are very guilty in this regard. They take a young girl from the warm atmosphere of a loving, cheerful home, and, after a few brief weeks of devotion, leave her to battle single-handed with new cares and new duties, and to bear sickness with what courage she may, and go their ways into the tangled paths of life, without a thought of the responsibilities they are shirking, or the solemn vows they have really broken.

#### ORIGIN OF COAL.

COAL, according to the modern hypothesis, is merely a transmuted vegetable soil which accumulated, not under water, but under the trees composing primeval forests. These forests stood on areas which were subjected to repeated changes of level in relation to that of the ocean. It must be understood that though the ground beneath us is popularly regarded as the type of everything steady and immovable, this earth of ours is far from deserving the character for stability with which it is thus fondly credited; absolute rest is all but unknown to it. It happens that even at the present day there are certain regions, such as those subject to volcanic disturbances, whose tendencies are always to move upwards, like the more aspiring of our youths, while there are others, such as the coral regions, which are steadily sinking, like those less fortunate youths who have failed in the voyage of life. So it was in the olden time.

The coal-beds appear to have accumulated on the latter class of areas—areas of depression—geographical regions in which the earth had a tendency to sink below the level of the ocean. Mud and silt had collected upon such areas until the deposits thus formed reached the surface-level of the water; and then came what appears to have been necessary to the growth of the coal-plants, namely, a bed of peculiar gray mud. We do not know why that mud came there or whence it was derived. That it was very different from the ordinary deposits, the sandstones and shales, which accumulated in the carboniferous ocean, is shown by the physical properties which it still possesses, and which they do not possess—properties which fit it for the purpose to which it is now devoted, of being manufactured into fire-bricks, whence its common name of fire-clay.

That this gray mud was the soil preferred by the great majority of the plants constituting the carboniferous forests is as obvious as that the oak woods of Herefordshire and the sunny south will not flourish upon the cold soils of the Lancashire uplands. Minute spores, representing the seeds of the plants which afterwards became coal, were floated to this mud by wind and water; and finding there a suitable soil, they germinated, struck root, and soon converted the swampy area into a magnificent forest. As the trees grew they shed successive showers of their microscopic spores, which often fell in such vast quantities as to constitute an important contribution to the accumulating vegetable soil; but along with them there fell other and more bulky objects, such as might be expected to accumulate under a semi-tropical forest. The dead leaves, broken branches, and prostrated stems, alike contributed a share to the decaying vegetable mass.

In the tropical regions of the present day such accumulations become rapidly decomposed, and pass away in gaseous forms; but such does not appear to have been the case in the carboniferous age—at least, not in the same degree. Even in Lancashire, notwithstanding all the influences tending to diminish the bulk of the vegetable mass—such as atmospheric decomposition—chemical changes occurring during the later processes of mineralization, and the pressure of superimposed rocks prolonged throughout all subsequent ages, we have coal-seams six and seven feet in thickness, whilst they occur in America, as for example in the coalfield on the James River, with the surprising thickness of between thirty and forty feet. Such accumulations of vegetable soil as these thicknesses of solid coal represent, almost exceed comprehension, and must indicate enormous periods of undisturbed forest-life.

But at length a change came over the sylvan scene; the land sank—whether suddenly or slowly we have no means of saying. The numbers of dead fishes found upon the roofs and upper portions of



some coals seem to indicate a sudden rush of pure water over the land, followed by the quick destruction of the fishes, poisoned by the bituminous vegetable mud in which they found themselves entangled. In other cases the roof of clean blue shale, devoid of all appearance of either animal or vegetable remains, and resting immediately upon a defined surface of pure coal, is suggestive of a slower submergence, allowing time for the destruction and obliteration of all traces of growing vegetation upon its surface.

## SCIENCE.

THE whole production of the precious metals throughout the world during 1873 is estimated to have been worth nearly 44,000,000*l*.

A HAIR, well packed in pulverized charcoal, after the usual smoking, will keep for years. Butter in pots, well surrounded with charcoal, will keep for twelve months. Each atom of charcoal can absorb 1,000 times its bulk of deleterious gases.

M. VIGLEAU notes the discovery of some curious crystals of glass extracted from a furnace which had been cold for some time. They differ completely in aspect and form from devitrified glass, appearing in the form of isolated prisms, each some 0.03 inch in length. This composition is different from that of the normal glass of the furnace, as soda is absent, while magnesia is present in excess.

SLUGS AND SNAILS.—A most effectual way of getting rid of these garden pests: Put small heaps of bran (about two handfuls) close to the plants which they destroy most, and then, about ten o'clock at night, go round and put a handful of quicklime on each heap; the number of slugs found killed in the morning will be almost incredible. Slugs prefer bran to any fruit or vegetable, and will congregate on these heaps from all parts of the garden.

DR. FRANKLAND reports, as the result of the chemical examination of the water supplied to the metropolis during March, that all the waters drawn from the Thames and Lea, except that supplied by the New River Company, was "much polluted by organic matter." The water supplied by each of the companies, except the Kent, New River, and West Middlesex, was "slightly turbid, and contained in each case living and moving organisms; it was not fit to be used for dietetic purposes."

MILD WINTER.—France, it seems, has experienced an unusually mild winter. M. Tastos has investigated the matter and thinks that he has found a great atmospheric current crossing the country, which bears about the same relation to the atmosphere as the Gulf Stream does to the ocean. This current becomes displaced in longitude; and according as a given region is in the centre or on the borders of the aerial flood the winter is calm and mild or else visited with cold and storms.

THE NATURE OF OZONE.—Professor Andrews, of Belfast, has read a paper before the Royal Society of Edinburgh, on "Ozone." He confirms his former experiments, that this mysterious body exists independently in the atmosphere. The facility with which the nature of ozone was changed was shown by shaking it in a bottle with a little perfectly dried ground glass, when simple oxygen appeared. The bleaching properties of ozone had been tried at both Belfast and Greenock and had failed. Dr. Andrews doubts the alleged connection of atmospheric ozone with the state of public health.

SIMPLE TIMBER PRESERVATIVE.—To render posts or timber, placed in the ground, practically impervious to moisture, and for a long time prevent decay, the following simple recipe has been tried and found to answer the purpose excellently. For fence and gate-posts it is particularly recommended. Take linseed oil, boil it, and mix it with charcoal dust until the mixture has the consistence of an ordinary paint. Give to the posts a single coat of the mixture before planting them, and no farmer, says one who has used it, living to the age of the patriarchs of old will live long enough to see the same post rotten. The posts or timber should be well seasoned and dry when the paint is applied.

RHUMATISM AND ELECTRICITY.—G. D. Powell, M.D., describes the cure of a valuable horse by means of electro-puncture needles, from four to six being inserted in the principal muscles of the fore quarters, also along the spine and hind quarters. The battery employed was that of Leclanché, from four to twelve large cells, alternating in strength, and the current broken, causing the muscles to contract perceptibly. This was kept up from two to three minutes at each place. Prior to treatment the animal was in so bad a condition that the owner was about to cause him to be shot. But within about six weeks after the commencement of the electrical treatment the horse was perfectly restored, and is now sound and useful.

THE WARM SPRINGS OF COSTA RICA.—Frantzius states that these springs, more than thirty in number, may be regarded as a continuation of the remarkable series of warm mineral springs discovered

by Humboldt in Venezuela, and extending for 150 miles from Cape Paria to Merida. The Costa Rica springs begin indeed 13 degrees of longitude farther west, but are situated under nearly the same parallel, viz., 10 deg. N., in a strip of land running for 30 miles from east to west. Most of them occur in narrow mountain gorges on the banks of rivers, or are even overflowed by the rivers, so that they are visible only in the dry season. Their temperature is higher in proportion as they are situated at a lower level. The highest observed temperature is 157.1 deg. The water contains some salt.

THE LAUGHING PLANT.—Palgrave's work on Central and Eastern Arabia gives an account of a plant whose seeds produce effects similar to those of laughing gas. It is a native of Arabia. A dwarf variety of it is found at Kassem, and another variety at Oman, which attains to a height of from three to four feet, with woody stems, wide-spreading branches, and bright green foliage. Its flowers are produced in clusters, and are of a bright yellow colour. The seed pods are soft and woolly in texture, and contain two or three black seeds, of the size and shape of a French bean. Their flavour is a little like that of opium, and their taste is sweet; the odour from them produces a sickening sensation and is slightly offensive. These seeds contain the essential property of this extraordinary plant, and, when pulverized and taken in small doses, operate upon a person in a most peculiar manner. He begins to laugh loudly, boisterously; then he sings, dances, and cuts all manner of fantastic capers. Such extravagance of gesture and manner was never produced by any other kind of dosing. The effect continues about an hour, and the patient is uproariously comical. When the excitement ceases the exhausted exhibitor falls into a deep sleep, which continues for an hour or more; and when he awakens he is entirely unconscious that any such demonstrations have been enacted by him. We usually say that there is nothing new under the sun; but this peculiar plant, recently discovered, as it exercises the most extraordinary influence over the human brain, demands from men of science a careful investigation.

THE International Exhibition opened on Easter Monday, and promises to be successful. The collection of pictures sent over by the Belgian Government contains some four hundred canvases, or thereabouts, and some of the works are magnificent. The Belgian gallery is ready for inspection, but the French gallery is not to open until the 1st of May.

THE sale of palms in Paris on Palm Sunday is reckoned to produce over 1,000*l*. There are sixty-seven churches in the capital, and round each of these are at least thirty vendors of palm, who realize 5*s*. by selling in sprigs a bundle of the precious tree bought by them in the market for 10*d*. These 2,010 marchands de rameaux obtain 500*l*. by the sale, and the rest is made up by the florists and costumongers. The most profitable neighbourhoods are those of the Madeleine, St. Augustin, Notre Dame des Victoires, and St. Roch.

ARMY RESERVES.—How completely Lord Cardwell's system of army reserves breaks down on the first occasion on which it was tested, is proved by the fact that in 1870 the 42nd Highlanders gave 80 men to the Army Reserve. In 1873 that regiment was sent to the Gold Coast, and in order to add a little flesh to its skeleton, additional men were required; yet not one of the 80 reserve men above-mentioned were called, but instead 130 volunteers were asked for from the 79th Highlanders. These volunteers were given, but the 79th was in consequence reduced to a mere verbal expression. We may mention, by the way, that the survivors of these 130 men are to have the option of remaining in the 42nd or returning to their old regiment.

RECENTLY a brilliant masked ball was given by the King of Denmark at the palace of Amalienborg, being the first fête of the character which has been given by the Danish Court since the year 1803, in the reign of Christian VII. The number of invitations was not large, the guests not being more than 300. One striking historical group consisted of the Count de F. Frijsenborg, formerly prime minister, and the Countess de Reventlow, a lady of honour, in the costumes of Christian IV. and his Queen Christina. The king was attired as a knight of the 16th century, and the queen in a costume of the time of Louis XIV. The princess royal wore a Hungarian costume, and the Princess Thyra an Italian dress. Among those whose magnificence of attire was remarked were:—The Austrian chargé d'affaires, Baron Salzburg, as a bird-seller, Baron de Blexin Finecke, as an Austrian officer of the old times, and the English minister in a Mexican costume.

DEMISE OF CHRISTIAN SHARPS.—The inventor of the celebrated breech-loading fire-arm known throughout the world as Sharps' rifle, died recently at Vernon, Conn., in the 61st year of his age.

Sharps' rifle was for a long time the only effective breech-loading gun in use, and its remarkable efficiency for military purposes soon rendered the old style of muzzle-loaders obsolete. Sharps' original patent was granted in 1848, before the invention of metallic cartridges, when paper cartridges only were used, fired by percussion caps. The inventor's task was to make an effective breech-loader, in which paper cartridges and caps could be employed, and this is what Christian Sharps successfully accomplished. The breech plug was made to slide vertically; its lower edge was sharpened into the form of a knife. The operation was such that the breech plug, in descending to its place, cut off the rear end of the paper cartridge, leaving the powder open to the flame of the percussion cap. Subsequent improvements on the gun were made by the inventor, which increased its value. Mr. Sharps was the inventor of many other useful devices besides firearms, from all of which others reaped pecuniary benefits, his own share being small. He was a most kind-hearted man.

LAMBETH PALACE.—Some important restorations have just been completed at Lambeth Palace, the works having been progressing during the last three years under the auspices of the Ecclesiastical Commission. The brick and stone-work of the Lollards' Tower has been externally renewed, and some of the rooms subdivided in order to fit it up as the town residence of the Bishop of Lichfield and his brother, Canon Selwyn. The rooms which formed the prison of the Lollards and other "heretics" have been allowed to remain in statu quo. The "Morton Tower," or as it is called "The Great Gate," is completed. It was built by Cardinal Morton in 1490. The roof and outer walls of the great hall in the centre, which now serves as the library, have also undergone many improvements. The books and MSS. in the library have undergone a complete repair by a special grant from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. To the list of archiepiscopal portraits of Lambeth have lately been added those of Archbishops Sumner and Longley, the latter by Richmond. Before the doors of Morton Tower every week, down to the present hour, a bounty or "dole" of money, bread, and provisions, is given to thirty poor parishioners of Lambeth, after receiving it in turns on different days.

ROMAN COINS.—A Barnstable correspondent reports the discovery of about fifty Roman coins in the neighbourhood of Bideford. He writes that a Mr. Glendenning, of Exeter, is now staying at Bideford, and a day or two ago went to the cliffs with a friend, and on his return, having occasion to go into a field for the purpose of seeking his dog, which had trespassed through a hedge, stumbled over an old tree near the roadside, when he heard a jingling sound like that of metal. He had disturbed the soil at the root of the tree, and as the sound seemed to be peculiar he made a search. In doing so a number of valuable coins, which had apparently been concealed a great many years, attracted his attention. They were all in a good state of preservation, and on a close examination proved to belong to the Roman period of domination in Great Britain, and also to different Roman Emperors of the time. Several of them are sesteritii of the Emperors Diocletian and Constantian, ranging from the middle to the latter part of the third century of the Christian era. Others are denarii of Domitian and Severus Alexander, having, in addition to the inscriptions, various emblems, such as the sacrificial altar, the legend "Principes Juventutis," and figures of Liberty and Concord.

BUST OF THE BARONESS BURDETT-COUTTS.—In the studio of Mr. W. Brodie, R.S.A., is a marble bust of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, executed from sittings given by her ladyship in the course of her recent sojourn in Edinburgh. Admirable as a likeness, the work is characterized by that graceful refinement of style which Mr. Brodie never fails to impart to his portrait-sculpture, more particularly when a female head is the subject to be dealt with. In the expression of the features the good sense and good feeling of the original, and that decisive firmness of purpose which in her so finely blends with sweet naturalness and gentle dignity, are most successfully rendered. The head, a masterly piece of modelling, is daintily set upon the shoulders, which are draped in a shawl with ornamental border. A ruff surrounds the neck, and meets upon the bosom at an angle, whose formality of outline is deftly relieved by the introduction of a sprig of lily of the valley—a flower, by the way, for which Mr. Brodie shows a very natural partiality. The draperies are disposed with exquisite simplicity, and their minutiae of lace and frill, like all other details of the subject, are worked out to a remarkable delicacy of finish. The bust, which claims to rank as one of the best among Mr. Brodie's many good busts, and which has had the advantage of being carved from marble of spotless purity, is, we believe, to be sent for exhibition to the Royal Academy.



[AN UNTIMELY INTERRUPTION.]

## THE HEIR OF THE VAUGHANS.

A SINGULARLY handsome woman, in spite of her fifty odd years, was Mrs. Major Vaughan. Tall and straight as an arrow, with a smooth fair face that had a faint flush of health in the beautifully-rounded cheeks, proud lips showing a glimmer of perfect teeth, clear, brilliant, steel-gray eyes, and hair like spun silver, the wonder and admiration of all who knew her.

But then the Vaughans were a remarkable race—very proud of the little excellences that distinguished them from the common herd, and this beautiful silken hair was one of them. No true Vaughan, they said, was ever born without it, and the haughty lady in question would not have parted with that silvery-spun glory for untold riches.

It was repeated in her handsome son, Cecil, only the silvery sheen had given place to a warm, rich, yellow glow, like sunlight shining on a southern wall. Very much like his mother looked this well-favoured Cecil, only handsomer, brighter, and younger, as was befitting. A true scion of his noble race was he, and Mrs. Vaughan was proud of him, and thought mother never before was blessed with such a son.

"If he only marries to please me my happiness will be complete," she said to herself, with a little sigh, every day of her life. "But men do make such silly choices, sometimes, when they are looking for a wife! Cecil may prove no better than the rest, in that respect. I believe it would kill me, though, if he were to make a *mésalliance*."

For her own part, she had not been guilty of the folly of an inferior marriage. Born a Vaughan, she had wedded one of her own race—a distant relative.

She was too clever by far, however, to say very much upon this subject to Cecil himself. When he had once begun to drift toward forbidden havens, there would be time enough for remonstrance and entreaty.

But, though her lips were mute, that did not prevent her thoughts from dwelling pretty constantly upon this theme. In fact, she had made her own selection for Cecil already, and was only waiting for him to betray his individual preference, which she believed he would very soon do; for who, in all the wide world, was so well suited to him as her dear young friend, Bertha Kenyon? Had she not invited Bertha for a long visit on purpose to throw the young people together? Had she not plotted and planned and manoeuvred, until she felt very much ashamed of her own hypocrisy, in order to precipitate an engagement?

She was seated in a great easy-chair of crimson velvet, in which she looked every inch a queen, one particular evening of which I am now writing. Cecil stood near her, bending down every now and then to smile into her face, or say some endearing word, for he was very proud of his mother, when the door suddenly opened and a petite, girlish figure flitted in, like a spirit, and stood before them.

A fairy-like figure it was, with a round, bright piquant face, all pink-and-white save the almond-shaped eyes of turquoise blue. Shining yellow hair, soft as floss-silk, fell in rippling curls about her shoulders, and her dress looked like a fleecy cloud that had caught and retained the red rose tints of a lovely sunset.

On seeing this bewitching vision Cecil stood staring, as if not quite certain whether or not he had been suddenly bereft of his senses; and Mrs. Vaughan straightened herself in her chair with a little shriek of dismay.

"Good gracious! It can never be Rose Varian!" The pretty, fairy-like creature laughed softly, and putting out her pretty, dimpled arms, twined them about Mrs. Vaughan's neck.

"Yes, dear old auntie," she said, kissing her rapturously, "it is your own Rose."  
Mrs. Vaughan drew back with a gasp.

"I—I—thought that you were safe at school!" "School!" echoed the beauty. "Humph! I'm tired of always being kept at school. And so I've come back to you, like a bad penny."

The haughty lady's face grew stern and cold. She could not wholly conceal her dismay. Putting off those clinging arms, she said, faintly:

"My vinaigrette, Cecil! These surprises quite upset me."

Cecil brought it from the mantel, scarcely taking his bewildered eyes off the lovely creature who seemed to have dropped from the skies so suddenly. She was bright and piquant, and, man-like, he could not help admiring her very much indeed.

Mrs. Vaughan detected his admiration, and grew whiter and sterner than ever. After toying with her vinaigrette for some minutes she turned and said to Miss Varian:

"I did not expect you, Rose. Why didn't you send word you were coming?"

The little beauty tossed her head.

"I didn't know it myself very long beforehand, auntie. The fact is, I quarrelled with Miss Garth, the lady principal—she said I was saucy and impudent, but that isn't true—and so I took French leave, as the saying is—came away without asking leave or licence."

Mrs. Vaughan frowned.

"Oh, you foolish child! Such things are so disgraceful. You must go back to-morrow and beg Miss Garth's pardon."

"I shall not go back, and I shall never beg Miss Garth's pardon," returned Rose, an expression not wholly amiable coming into her turquoise eyes.

Mrs. Vaughan sighed and knitted her brows. She scarcely knew what to say to this daring little rebel. Besides, there stood Cecil, staring at her still, with a half-amused expression on his handsome face.

"Mother," he said, by way of interruption, "I beg your pardon. But this scene is quite inexplicable to me. Will you do me the honour to present me to this young lady?"

"Humph! I thought you knew her."

This was not true. But Mrs. Vaughan felt very angry, very much out of sorts, and did not consider her words at all.

"I have not that pleasure—as yet."

"Then let me introduce you. My son, Cecil. Miss Rose Varian."

The young man bowed low over the pretty slender hand she extended. For an instant he caught the flash of a pair of eyes bewilderingly bright and dangerous.

"I am glad to meet you, Mr. Vaughan," Rose murmured, sweetly.

Cecil said something in response that called a vivid blush to her cheek, and then turned once more to his mother.

"I don't like half explanations."

She understood him.

"Cecil, how silly you are getting to be," she said, pettishly. "Did I not write to you all about Rose, while you were on the Continent?"

"I'm sure you never mentioned her name."

"It must have been an oversight. Her father died something more than a year ago, and left her in my charge. I stand to her very much in the light of a guardian. That is all there is to tell; and now I hope you are satisfied."

"It is strange you never spoke of her before."

"Very strange," echoed Rose herself, those liquid blue eyes twinkling. "I do not feel flattered at being considered of so little importance."

"I tell you it was an oversight," Mrs. Vaughan said, sharply.

Rose knew better. She was a shrewd little body, and thought she could understand the real reason well enough.

"Auntie knows I am pretty," she thought. She always called Mrs. Vaughan "Auntie," though no such relationship really existed. "She meant to keep me safely hidden away from her handsome son for some time to come. Dear me! but he is handsome. It's fortunate, after all, that I had that little falling out with Miss Garth."

She smiled and shook her pretty head until every shining curl seemed to be dancing a jig. Already the sly mix was beginning to lay her plans for the future.

Cecil had scarcely released that slender, dimpled hand when there came a soft rustling of silk through the hall, and Bertha Kenyon entered.

She was a very handsome woman—tall and stately, with shining dark eyes, a pale, high-bred face, a sweet, tender mouth, and a graceful ease, so to speak—rather an innate refinement, that might have done honour to one of royal blood.

Her dark eyes opened a little wider than usual at the sight of a strange face, and one so infinitely charming, but she was too well-bred to manifest her surprise more openly.



Mrs. Vaughan stumbled a little over the introductions. She still felt angry, annoyed, and mentally wished Rose Varian in the antipodes at that particular time.

"Her coming couldn't have been more inopportune," she said to herself. "Cecil is sure to be charmed with her—men always are with these pink-and-white faces. Fugh! As if one wanted a wax doll for a wife. But Rose had better take care how she comes between Bertha Kenyon and my son. I couldn't brook that sort of thing."

Miss Kenyon was very pleasant and gracious to the new-comer. It was her way to have a smile and a kind word for everybody. But she could not help thinking her own thoughts, and Mrs. Vaughan seemed to read some of them, for she said, presently, pointing to the cloud of rosy drapery Rose had on:

"I don't understand why you should come here dressed in that fashion. One would imagine you had just returned from a fancy ball."

Rose laughed carelessly.

"Please, auntie, do not criticize my dress. I had been doing wrong, you know, and must make confession directly I arrived, and, girl-like, it seemed as if I must make myself as pretty as possible, and disarm you of all resentment in that way."

Cecil heard both question and answer, and glanced up quickly. This girl was very artful, or very innocent. Which was it?

Mrs. Vaughan could have told well enough. She opened her eyes incredulously.

"Humph! You should have given me credit for better sense than to have had my head turned by any such folly."

"I see it now," Rose returned, good-humouredly. "However, we all make errors sometimes. But, indeed, I was very anxious to please you. I tumbled off my ugly wraps, though, of course, I expected to find you alone. But they are so disfiguring."

Rose told little fibs, on occasion, and this was one of them. She had peeped in at the drawing-room window, in passing, and knew very well there was a gentleman, and that he was quite young enough and distinguished-looking enough to be made the target for her coquettish little arrows.

Presently the young people withdrew to the piano. Mrs. Vaughan sat watching them for a long time afterwards, a slight frown contracting her fair white brow.

There was a little music, and a good deal of gay, animated talk, the greater part of both being done by Rose. Mrs. Vaughan could not help seeing that a shade of pensiveness settled upon Bertha Kenyon's face presently. She became paler than her wont, and a dreamy, far-away look came into her pretty dark eyes.

But Rose more than made up for Bertha's silence. She did nothing but prattle and laugh, and lift her turquoise orbs to Cecil's with glances at once shy and enticing. It was enough to turn any man's head—the looks she gave him.

"What an arch hypocrite," sighed the watchful mother, quite wrathfully. "I believe that quarrel with Miss Garth was all a fiction, and Rose knew Cecil was here, and came on purpose to make a fool of him. She is quite equal to a cunning game of that sort. She knows Cecil has money, plenty of it, while she has very little. The mix understands perfectly well on which side her bread is buttered."

Not a very elegant way of putting it, but Mrs. Vaughan was nearer right than she might have been. With whatever plans Rose Varian might have entered the house, it was now quite evident she would not be averse to bringing Cecil at her feet.

When Mrs. Vaughan's patience was quite exhausted by Rose's coquettish wiles, happening to catch her son's eye, she signed for him to approach. "Come here, Cecil, I have something to say to you."

He approached, and leaning over her chair, softly kissed her cheek.

"What is it, ma mère?"

Mrs. Vaughan coloured, and began to cough. When she beckoned to her son she had suddenly made up her mind to tell him her wishes, let the consequences be what they might. Anything was better than to see him drift blindfold into the snare Rose had set for him.

But the topic was a very embarrassing one. She could scarcely find fitting words with which to express herself. So, after a moment's dead silence, she said, quite abruptly:

"Cecil, I would like to hear your opinion of Bertha Kenyon. Charming, isn't she?"

He reddened, and looked away in some confusion. "Very, ma mère. I don't think I ever met her equal, in some respects, and I have seen a great many beautiful women."

This was candid, at any rate. Mrs. Vaughan took heart of grace. Smiling loudly, she said, in her softest, sweetest tones:

"I am glad you admire her so much. I hope she may be mistress in this house, when I am dead and gone."

Cecil could not pretend to misunderstand her. He shifted uneasily, glanced once or twice at the two lovely figures still lingering at the piano, and thought dreamily how glad these words might have made him a few hours earlier—before Rose Varian came.

"I knew you were fond of Miss Kenyon," he faltered, after a pause.

"I couldn't love a daughter any better, Cecil," laying her soft hand upon his. "It would please me very much indeed if you would speak and decide your fate to-night."

He started, and the hot blood reddened his brow again.

"I will make the attempt," he said, rather reluctantly.

"I will take care that you have the opportunity."

She was as good as her word. By-and-by, when Rose left the piano, and threw herself upon a cushion at their feet, in an attitude of unstudied grace the young man's artistic eye fully appreciated, Mrs. Vaughan gave him a significant glance.

"Rose," said she, "I want you to tell me all about your difficulties at the seminary. Cecil, do you join Miss Kenyon. It is not at all befitting you should be a listener to this conversation."

The young man bowed, and moved away. Rose's turquoise eyes flashed angrily, but she felt herself powerless to interrupt the tête-à-tête that she now saw was inevitable.

The conservatory was lighted, and Cecil drew Bertha into its cool dusk and sylvan quiet. It seemed a scene of fairy-like beauty at that moment—tropical plants and tropical perfumes everywhere, and the soft, silvery plash of fountains in their marble basins. It was like a glimpse of Eden.

Cecil quite forgot Rose's bewitching face and turquoise blue eyes, under the enchanted spell that at once enwrapped his senses. At one time he had been quite sure he loved Bertha, and now the old feeling came back as strong as ever. He grew cooler and calmer, and his whole soul made confession that this was the woman of all the world to guide and shape his future.

Bertha seemed to have an intuitive sense of what was coming. She had banished the dreadful fear and jealousy that had beset her while Rose was with them, and eyes and face were luminous, while the loveliest blushes imaginable chased each other over her pretty cheeks.

Cecil talked of other things, in an absent, dreamy way, for a long while; but suddenly he leaned over her, his whole heart in his eyes.

"Bertha," he whispered.

She glanced up shyly, as if her name spoken in that tone thrilled her through and through.

"Bertha," he murmured, very softly, "you must guess what it is I wish to say to you. For days and days a confession has been at my tongue's end. Let me speak to-night; let me tell you—"

He stopped abruptly, and the sentence was never finished, for Rose Varian came tripping into the conservatory, bright, smiling, irresistible. She had managed at last to break away from Mrs. Vaughan.

"You here?" she cried, lifting her pretty slender hands in well-simulated dismay. "I thought the conservatory quite deserted, and ran in to hide away from dear old auntie. She has been giving me a dreadful lecture."

Bertha turned very pale at the interruption, and could not speak.

Cecil himself felt slightly confused.

"I hope you didn't deserve it," he stammered.

"I don't know," laughed Rose, carelessly. "I daresay I did, for I was always getting into scrapes, and doing improper things. I believe I kept up a continual uproar in Miss Garth's school; she will be delighted to have me away."

Cecil smiled. To him the girl seemed simply artless and unconventional. But Bertha held quite a different opinion. She thought her coarse and sly and cunning.

"I wonder that he can admire her so much," she thought, as she stood, pale and silent, listening to Rose's silly prattle, and seeing how often Cecil turned intoxicated glances upon her face. "I suppose men are never keen-sighted where our sex are concerned. A woman would have read her in five minutes."

They all went back to the drawing-room together, and Rose could not resist the impulse to send a triumphant flash of her eyes in Mrs. Vaughan's direction as they entered.

Later, when they had gone upstairs, Rose knocked at Miss Kenyon's door, and went in for a few moments.

"I beg your pardon," she said, toying carelessly with a box of rings upon the dressing-case, "but I would like to know if you and Mr. Vaughan are engaged?"

Miss Kenyon turned, looking at her in cold surprise.

"No," she answered, haughtily, "we are not. Why do you inquire?"

Rose coloured and stammered, in spite of herself. She had meant to wound Bertha, but had failed signally in her intention.

"Idle curiosity," she said, rising to go. "Perhaps I should not have broached so delicate a subject. But schoolgirls are very communicative, you know, and I meant no harm."

Miss Kenyon turned indignantly away, in no wise appeased by such a limping explanation. Contempt was written all over her high-bred face, and Rose went out with her own very much flushed.

"You shall pay dearly for this scorn," she muttered between her teeth, shaking one little clenched fist at the door the instant it was closed between them. "Rose Varian never suffers an insult to pass unavenged."

She did look wicked and impish enough for anything, in spite of her bright, debonaire beauty.

Rose was not sent back to school the next day. Perhaps Mrs. Vaughan had thought better of it, perhaps she dreaded a struggle with the daring little rebel. At any rate, the matter was suffered to remain in abeyance.

The second morning after her arrival, Rose descended to the breakfast-room somewhat earlier than usual. She had heard the postman ring a few moments before, and perhaps that was the reason of her haste, for the letters were always left on the table.

Two laid beside Mrs. Vaughan's plate. Nobody was in the room. Rose turned them quickly over that she might see the address upon each, and all the pretty pink colouring faded from her face as she did so.

"From Miss Garth," she muttered, glaring at one of the letters. "I wish I knew what the old stupid has written to auntie."

For a moment she hesitated, trembling all over. Then, snatching up the letter in question, she was about to thrust it into the bosom of her dress, when the door opened quickly.

The letter fell fluttering upon the table again. Rose wheeled round with a sharp little cry. It was Mrs. Vaughan herself who confronted her.

Rose was not a person to remain long at a loss. Affecting a light laugh, and bringing the colour back to her face by a powerful effort, she said, quite gaily:

"Good morning, auntie. I am the early bird for once, you see."

"Yes," answered Mrs. Vaughan, dryly.

She had witnessed the little by-play, just as she entered. But not a muscle of her face betrayed this fact. She had almost perfect self-control, as befitting a woman of her age and experience.

She sat down quite coolly, and broke the seal of her letters, reading that from Miss Garth last. Rose watched her, with her heart in her mouth, though she tried to appear indifferent.

Presently, Mrs. Vaughan looked up with a smile.

"Miss Garth has written, my dear," said she.

"She takes it for granted that you came directly to me, and seems to have borrowed no trouble on your account."

"What does she say?" asked Rose, breathlessly.

"That you were dissatisfied with her system of government, and left the seminary quite abruptly."

"Is that all?" drawing a deep breath. "I was afraid the old thing would fill half-a-dozen sheets with scandal about me. So is equal to it."

"Humph!" was the only comment Mrs. Vaughan made.

She had not told Rose all the contents of that letter, for one passage ran thus:

"It is my duty to inform you, madam, that Miss Varian's conduct has been very reprehensible, from first to last. For nearly two months she has been carrying on a flirtation with a handsome adventurer who recently made his appearance in our neighbourhood. When I learned the fact I kindly remonstrated with her; she laughed in my face. I pointed out the folly of such conduct; she scoffed at me. I commanded her to see the man in question no more; she openly defied me, and we have reason to think she stole from the post-bag a letter I wrote you, acquainting you with her doings. As a last resort, we locked her into her chamber, from which she contrived to escape, and nothing has since been heard of her."

This was a startling communication. But, with ready presence of mind, Mrs. Vaughan decided to keep it to herself for the present. By-and-by she would tell Cecil, if matters went too far.

Several days wore on. Rose, somewhat relieved of the haunting fear of exposure that had subdued her spirits in the first place, was gay, bright, dazzling, bewildering. She seemed like an embodied sunbeam. She was all froth and foam and sparkle,

like champagne. She was the light and life of the house. Everybody felt her power, even cool, worldly-wise Mrs. Vaughan.

Cecil felt it more than all the others, simply because her brightest smiles, her most winning ways were all for him. She was playing for a high stake, and meant to win it. The wily creature knew exactly what strings to pull to draw the young man to her side, and she had no mercy.

If Cecil had really spoken the words that bound him to Bertha Kenyon, he would have been safe. A sense of honour would have kept him firm and true. But he stood upon that debatable ground from which he could look either way. And Rose's bright debonaire beauty bewildered him. He began to think he could never be happy without her, and to shun poor, patient Bertha, as we shun all those whom we know we have injured. Mrs. Vaughan watched silently the progress of affairs, but was not quite ready to play her trump card. She was sitting at her dressing-room window, in the purple dusk, one evening, when she saw two figures pacing slowly along one of the shady garden paths at a distance—Rose, and a gentleman who was not Cecil.

Her mind was made up in an instant. Throwing a lace shawl over her shoulders, she stole downstairs, and out upon the lawn, taking her stand in a clump of larches.

Rose and her companion passed near, presently. "You are cruel," he was saying, in an angry voice; it was a voice that, somehow, sounded strangely familiar to the listener. "You went away, and left no word where I could find you. It was by the merest accident I heard you were here, Rose."

"Of course you followed me at once?" she murmured, sweetly.

"Yes. Are you not my betrothed wife? I could not give you up so easily."

"Hush!" cried Rose. "You must go away. Mrs. Vaughan is my guardian, you know. She would be very angry if she found you here. You must go away, I tell you, and see me no more."

"I won't," he answered, flatly. "What do you mean by dismissing me in this manner? Oh, Rose, have you ceased to love me?"

"No, no. I only ask for time, that I may make everything straight and easy. Go away—leave the neighbourhood entirely for two months, and then you may come back to claim me."

The man uttered a stifled exclamation. Mrs. Vaughan did not hear what it was, but, obeying a sudden impulse, she stepped out of the dense shadow of the larches, and drew nearer.

"Rose, is that you?" she called.

"Yes, auntie," was the answer, in a trembling voice, after a minute's hesitation.

"Humph!" She glanced sharply at the young girl's companion, but it was now too dark to see his face distinctly. Besides, her eyes were not so good as they once had been.

"You have a stranger with you, Rose," she said, a little sternly. "I don't like these twilight walks for young people. Bring your friend to the house. Nay, I insist that you do so," for Rose was beginning to demur.

"And for my own part, madam," said the man, courteously, "I shall insist upon going, after your kind invitation."

She walked towards the house, and the young people followed, evidently against Rose's wishes. But the girl's companion was as grim and stubborn as Mrs. Vaughan herself. Perhaps he saw a little selfish advantage in this encounter, and was determined not to lose it.

The lamps were lighted in the drawing-room, and Bertha Kenyon sat there alone, turning over a book of engravings. Cecil entered from the library at the very instant our odd little party crossed the hall, and so the whole confronted each other in the brilliant lamplight of the larger apartment.

Mrs. Vaughan stood still at last, and looked grimly into Rose's white, scared face.

"Now, my dear, pray present me to your friend."

Tone and look called the angry blood into the girl's cheek, and she was herself again.

"Certainly, dear aunt. Mr. Robert Melvin, Mrs. Vaughan."

At the sound of that name, Mrs. Vaughan uttered a sudden cry, and dropped all in a heap into the nearest chair.

"Robert Melvin?" she gasped, and gave him a short, keen glance, growing frightfully pale all at once.

He was a tall, handsome fellow, sufficiently like Cecil to have been his brother. Indeed, the resemblance was striking.

Mrs. Vaughan saw it at a glance. None but the Vaughans ever had that peculiar look.

"Yes," said Rose, staring hard. "Do you know Mr. Melvin?"

"No!"

"Ah, I comprehend!" with a flash of her eyes, and a toss of her pretty head. "You see how marvelously he is like your son."

Mrs. Vaughan did not answer.

While she sat with one white, quivering hand over her eyes, Rose very coolly presented her friend to Cecil and Miss Kenyon. She was determined to put a bold face on a very unpleasant situation.

"Mr. Melvin was a friend of mine at the seminary," she said, giving Cecil a quick, appealing glance from out her pretty blue eyes. "He came upon purpose to renew the acquaintance."

"Yes," assented Mr. Melvin, laughing somewhat constrainedly. "It seemed unwise wholly to lose sight of Miss Varian."

Rose coloured, and Cecil bit his lip angrily.

"I hope she appreciates the trouble you have taken, Mr. Melvin."

"I have no doubt but that she does," was the quiet answer.

"My dear Miss Kenyon," said Rose, abruptly, "do not the gentlemen bear a striking resemblance to each other?"

Bertha made an affirmative reply.

"I have often thought of it. Of course it is quite accidental."

"Of course," put in Mrs. Vaughan, sharply, for she was listening. "How could it be otherwise?"

The colour slowly returned to her pale cheeks. She even condescended to question Robert Melvin, after a little.

"I have no history," he said, in answer to her queries. "I am a waif—a castaway. Even my name may be a borrowed one—I do not know."

Rose listened with the colour coming and going in her dimpled cheeks. Could she marry a nameless adventurer when the heir of the Vaughans was ready to fall at her feet? No, it was out of the question.

Mr. Melvin remained quite late. Rose was creeping upstairs, after he went, thinking her own peculiar thoughts, when Cecil strode up behind her, very white and stern.

"Rose," he said, sharply, "what is that man to you?"

She clung to the railing, trembling visibly.

"Mr. Melvin? Nothing. How could you think it?"

"It is false," he cried out, as if the words hurt him. "He loves you!"

"Is that my fault?" murmured the girl, bursting into tears. "I didn't mean he should. I never gave him any encouragement. Could I help his being so very, very—foolish?"

Cecil's face softened. He caught both her hands in his own.

"Then you do not care for him?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, Rose, Rose, do you love me?"

Her head dropped on his shoulder, and the answer came so low that he could scarcely catch it. But it was wholly satisfactory.

When he passed his mother's door, an hour later, she opened it and spoke to him.

"Come in, Cecil."

There was something worn and weary in her voice. She pointed to a chair and sat down beside him, looking utterly miserable.

"You have been with Rose," she said, abruptly.

"Tell me all that has passed between you."

He started, and flushed guiltily.

"I love her," he said, after a brief silence, but speaking with decision. "She has promised to be my wife."

"Your wife?" echoed Mrs. Vaughan, with a groan.

"Yes. But the engagement must be kept a secret for the present. She wishes it. She has reasons for not having it proclaimed publicly."

"I should think she had," was the bitter answer.

"She is afraid of Mr. Melvin's anger. She was his betrothed wife before she ever saw you."

Cecil grew ghastly pale.

"It is not true!" he cried. "I will not believe it. She has been maligned to you."

"Listen, my poor boy."

And she burst into tears.

"What is it, mother?"

"Listen," she said, again. "Rose is a false, mercenary creature. Let me prove it to you."

She told him of Mrs. Garth's letter, and the conversation she had overheard in the garden.

"You can put two and two together. Of course Mr. Robert Melvin is the gentleman she used to meet clandestinely at the seminary."

Cecil listened like a man who had received a sudden shock. But conviction struck to his very soul. He writhed in his chair, and put off his mother's clinging arms. Slowly the scales were falling from his eyes.

"How stupid I have made myself!" he broke out, at last, wiping great drops of perspiration from his brow.

"I was angry, jealous—the attentions of that

man maddened me! That is why I spoke to-night. And now, now I begin to realize I do not really love her, after all. She intoxicated—bewildered me."

"Poor boy, you shall not sacrifice yourself."

"My troth is plighted, mother. It is too late to turn back. A Vaughan never breaks his word."

She smiled upon him proudly in spite of her unhappiness. What a dear, brave, noble boy he was!

"Go to your room," she said, rising, after thinking earnestly for some minutes. "Do not trouble yourself over this unhappy affair. I think I see a way out of it. Leave everything to me. Good night, my boy."

She kissed him fondly, and sent him away.

Robert Melvin called again the next morning. The housekeeper, Mrs. Vine, chanced to be crossing the hall just as he entered. She let fall the water picher she was carrying, and it broke into a thousand pieces upon the marble floor.

"Heaven bless and save us!" she cried, looking frightened.

"What is the matter?" said Rose, coming quickly out of the drawing-room.

Mrs. Vine pointed to the young man with her hand shaking dreadfully.

"I thought I had seen a ghost," she faltered. "He is the very picture of Rupert Vaughan, my poor master who is dead and gone."

"Indeed," said Rose, growing interested at once. The housekeeper had lived with the Vaughans all her life and knew their secrets as well as she did her own. "How very strange! Tell me all about Rupert Vaughan."

Mrs. Vine shook her head.

"My mistress would be very angry," she muttered. "The story has been hushed up all these years."

Then she darted away as if afraid of revealing more.

Rose's eyes met those of her quondam lover.

"Oh, Robert," she said, in a hoarse whisper, "I half believe you are a Vaughan, after all!"

He laughed.

"It is quite possible," his tone careless in the extreme. "Anybody can see there is some mystery here."

"Perhaps you are the real heir to all these broad acres."

"I wish I was, my dear. We would be married to-morrow."

Rose blushed and sighed. She loved Robert a thousand times better than she did Cecil. Oh, why couldn't he have been rich like the other, that she might have listened to the voice of her heart?

Perhaps he was rich, and did not know it—rich, that is, if he had his rights.

Rose was a very clever body, and she determined to know the truth before going any farther.

You would have smiled to see how nicely she managed affairs while Robert remained. Her smiles were equally distributed between him and Cecil—so equally that neither one would have suspected the relation in which she stood to the other by her actions. She was walking on a bridge of glass, and chose her steps very carefully.

That night Mrs. Vine was closeted in her mistress's room for a long time.

Rose heard her go up and stole after her to listen at the keyhole.

She did not catch many words of what was said. But she heard quite enough to deepen her conviction that Mrs. Vaughan knew more about Robert Melvin than she cared to acknowledge.

She grew nervous, impatient. The very next day she waylaid Mrs. Vine.

"Tell me who and what Mr. Melvin is," she cried, catching hold of the housekeeper's arm. "I will know! You are hiding a secret from me. Tell me the whole truth."

"I don't dare," answered the old woman, trembling.

"Why don't you dare?"

"It would be such a blow to my mistress and to—Cecil! It mustn't be told. Name and fortune would both be gone! Don't ask me to tell. It would ruin those who are so kind to me! You shall never, never know the truth from my lips!"

She broke violently away, and fled towards her own room.

As for Rose, she took a walk in the garden, and thought the matter all over. There was now no doubt in her mind but that Robert was the true heir of the Vaughans. A great wrong had been done him, to which Mrs. Vaughan herself was privy, if she had not been, indeed, the leading spirit.

How easy it would be to confront her with a bold accusation, and compel her to acknowledge the truth.

Robert himself came up while her mind was still busy. She was an impulsive creature; and you know she was shrewd. She held out her hand to him



"If you expect ever to make me your wife, you must marry me now within the hour," she said, with scant ceremony.

He was surprised, but delighted. Of course he took her at her word, for he really loved her.

That same afternoon Mrs. Vaughan was sitting in the drawing-room, with Cecil and Bertha Kenyon beside her, when a carriage rolled up before the door, and Robert Melvin lifted out Rose.

Mrs. Vaughan had missed the little intriguante. Whether she guessed where she had gone or not I cannot tell, for she shrewdly kept her own counsel.

There was a moment's delay, and Rose entered with a free, bold step, followed by Robert.

"This man is my husband," she said, confronting Mrs. Vaughan, and flashing defiance out of her turquoise blue eyes at Cecil. "I found I loved him far better than your son, and so I married him this morning."

Mrs. Vaughan arched her brows, and smiled whimsically.

"Indeed," she said. "But why do you bring him here?"

"I came to claim his rights and mine," flashed Rose. "I know you have defrauded him, so make no denial. Mrs. Vine knows it too, and I can compel her to give testimony to that effect, if necessary."

Mrs. Vaughan turned coldly away.

"Your husband has no right in my home, Rose."

"He is a Vaughan. You dare not deny it."

"I do not deny it," was the calm reply. "I am sorry to have the old scandal raked up, but there is now no help for it. Yes, Robert Melvin has the Vaughan blood in his veins, but he has no right to the name. His mother was never his father's wife."

There came a horrified cry from Rose, and Mrs. Vaughan resumed:

"I think you have checkmated yourself, my dear. Rupert Vaughan, my husband's younger brother, was very wild in his youth. The man you have married is his illegitimate son. We have hushed up the story very carefully, for it was the one stain upon our proud name. I would have told you the truth if you had come to me and demanded it."

She turned proudly away, as if to end the interview. Just how far she was accountable for the turn affairs had taken she never told anybody—even her son. But Mrs. Vine knew.

Cecil married Bertha Kenyon, and is very happy. The sentiment that he feels for Bertha is love; he knows it now, the other was a delusion.

Rose is happy too, in her way. Mrs. Vaughan, as atonement for any wrong she might have done them, made the young people a liberal allowance, and money and ease are the gods Rose worships. R. W.

# FAETIÆ.

THE woman who makes good pudding in silence is better than one that makes a tart reply.

A PHYSICIAN asking for a renewal of a note, gives as a reason: "We are in a horrible crisis; there is not a sick man in the district."

A FASHIONABLE lady lately dropped one of her eyebrows in the church pew, and dreadfully frightened a young man sitting next to her, who thought it was his moustache.

A LITTLE LEARNING IS A DANGEROUS THING.

Boy (pointing to shop): "Look ye 'ere, Alf, ain't that a disgraceful bit o' spellin' for Regent-street? P.a.r.f.u.m.e.r!"—*Fun*.

WHY should not people at evening parties be properly labelled with a number in some conspicuous but convenient place, and described in a catalogue, so that one might know who they were, and all about them, without troubling the host or hostess?

## COMPREHENSIVE.

Preceptor: "Now, can any of you tell me anything remarkable in the life of Moses?"

Boy: "Yes, sir. He was the only man who broke all the Commandments at once!"—*Punch*.

## A FRENCH COOK.

Cook: "I shall want my three evenings a week."

Mistress: "Oh, you really can't have that."

Cook (with decision): "I must! I can't think of giving up my French lessons!"—*Fun*.

## A REFLECTION ON WATER.

Scientific Old Party: "Extraordinary thing, that high tide the other day—quite impossible to account for!"

Smart Youth: "Reason's plain enough—Adulteration Act. Can't dilute their milk now, and consequently there's an immense extra quantity of water flowing to the sea."—*Fun*.

A STORY is told of a father in a church, who when the marriage service came to the point where the clergyman asks: "Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?" replied, "Well, sir, I am called to do it, although it do go agin the grain. I

wanted her to marry Bill Plowser, who is worth twice the money o' that there man." The answer was not considered regular.

A YOUNG gentleman lately made an evening call upon a young lady. It was getting on toward nine o'clock, when the young lady inquired the time of evening. "Five minutes to nine," was the reply. "How long will it take you to go home?" "Five minutes." "Then," said the young lady, "if you start now you will get home just at nine o'clock." He performed the feat in time.

## "USURPER."

Wife: "Good gracious, George! what are you going to do?"

George ("who is so hasty"): "Well, my dear, you talked of warehousing the furniture, while we were away, in a fireproof 'thingumy,' so I thought we might as well have the burning of it ourselves, as coals are so dear!"—*Punch*.

## THE SIMPLICITY OF TRUTH.

"Oh, what do you think, Mr. Lillybrow? The other day I was taken for twenty-five, and I am only eighteen!"

"Haw! Wonder what you'll be taken for when you're twenty-five?"

"For better for worse, I hope!"

Mr. Lillybrow looks pensive.—*Punch*.

## KEARNEY'S TREASURE.

It is not much to look at,

A coil of worsted blue,

Twisted to hang a picture—

It is not much—to you.

And yet, 'mid Kearney's treasures,

Soft, tissue-wrapped, it lies

Just as his fingers left it,

A patch of summer skies.

Ah, saddest task of friendship,

When helpless hands are cold,

To scan the hoarded treasures,

Whose keys we may not hold!

What happy hopes unwritten

With this were woven through,

What fagots of remembrance

Bound with this line of blue!

But, see! the searching daylight,

That peers in ev'rywhere,

Has told the secret. See you

That shining golden hair,

That lights the azure ripple,

Like sunshine on the sea?

Ah, Kearney, friend beloved,

Was love but pain to thee?

Since that sweet idle summer,

Down by the lily lake,

Was the remembered idol,

Through clay, too fair to break?

E. L.

## GEMS.

HE who expects to find a friend without faults will never find one. He who says what he likes, hears what he does not like. They who give willingly, love to give quickly. A foolish friend does more harm than a wise enemy. An old dog cannot alter his way of barking. A civil denial is better than a rude grant. Safe is he who serves a good conscience.

THEY may be the strains of sadness and sorrow; they may be the loftier notes of joy and gladness. Heaven knows where the melodies of nature are, and what discipline will call them forth. Some with plaintive tongue must walk among the lowly of life's weary ways; others in loftier paths, and hymn of nothing but joy as they tread the mountain tops of life; but they all unite without discord or jar as the ascending anthem of love and believing hearts finds its way into the chorus of the redeemed in heaven.

THERE is no greater every-day virtue than cheerfulness. This quality in man among men is like sunshine to the day, or gentle, renewing moisture to parched herbs. The light of a cheerful face diffuses itself, and communicates the happy spirit that inspires it. The sourest temper must sweeten in the atmosphere of continuous good-humour. As well might fog and cloud and vapour hope to cling to the sun-illuminated landscape as the blues and moroseness to combat jovial speech and exhilarating laughter. Be cheerful always. There is no path but will be easier travelled, no load but will be lighter, no shadow on heart or brain but will lift sooner, in presence of a determined cheerfulness.

A HORSE GUARDS order will shortly be issued expressing Her Majesty's approval of the word "Ashantes" being borne on the colours and appoint-

ments of the 23rd Fusiliers, 42nd Highlanders, Rifle Brigade, and 1st and 2nd West India Regiments, in recognition of the services rendered by the corps during the late campaign.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

POTATOES PRESERVED BY SCALDING.—Potatoes have been well preserved by simply scalding them for two or three minutes, and then well drying them. They will keep well and store well also on ship-board.

BORAX FOR COLDS.—Borax has proved a most effective remedy in certain forms of colds. In sudden hoarseness or loss of voice in public speakers or singers from colds, relief for an hour or so, as by magic, may be often obtained by slowly dissolving and partially swallowing a lump of borax the size of a garden pea, or about three or four grains, held in the mouth for ten minutes before speaking or singing. This produces a profuse secretion of saliva, or "watering" of the mouth and throat, probably restoring the voice or tone to the dried vocal cords, just as wetting brings back the missing notes to a flute when it is too dry.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

THE death rate in the north of Italy is very heavy—at least five times above the average—owing no doubt to the recent sudden changes of temperature.

THE sum required in the ensuing year to meet the claims of officers arising out of the abolition of purchase is 657,000*l*.

MR. GLADSTONE'S expenses at the Greenwich election in February last are officially declared to have been 1,323*l*.

THE collection of Chinese coins in the museum of the Paris Mint consists of nearly 800 specimens, gold and silver. One of the pieces dates from 1,700 years before Jesus Christ.

THE British Archaeological Association have fixed upon Bristol as the place for holding their annual congress, from the 6th to the 10th of August next, under the presidency of Mr. Hodgson, M.P.

A CHANGE in the form and size of the Wimbledon targets has been made by the National Rifle Association. The targets in future will be on the Swiss system.

It is proposed to construct a railway from Naples to the crater of Mount Vesuvius. The journey will be made in an hour and a quarter, and the line is to cost three or four million francs. Signor Gallanti is enabled, by his study of the subject, to guarantee the safety of passengers in the event of an eruption.

AN appeal is made in the Brighton papers on behalf of Sir C. W. Hockaday Dick, Bart., who seeks for assistance to prosecute some claims he has for 50,000*l*. advanced to Charles I., a pension of 132*l*., discontinued by Government in 1845, and compensation of 16,000 acres of land in Nova Scotia, granted to his ancestor, Sir William Dick, by charter.

THE suite of rooms selected at Windsor Castle for the use of the Emperor of Russia will be nearly similar to the apartments used by the Emperor and Empress of the French when they visited the Queen at Windsor Castle in April, 1855, and will include the Vandyke-room or old ball-room, the Zueharella-room or Queen's state drawing-room, the Queen's Closet, the King's Closet, and the Council Chamber (which was used as the bedroom of the Empress of the French). The Audience Chamber and the Presence Chamber will be reserved for the use of the Emperor's suite, and apartments for the latter will also be provided in the Round Tower, or Castle Keep. The state apartments are now closed to the public, and will remain so till after the Imperial visit to the Queen.

A COVERING OF SNOW AS PROTECTION AGAINST FROST.—Ebermayer gives, in his recent work on the influence of the forests, a table of observations showing the temperature of the earth covered by snow during the very cold weather of December, 1871, in Bavaria. The fact has been generally known that snow is the best possible protection against the penetration of frost into the earth, and that it is the natural protection of seeds, young plants, and other vegetation against frost. It is, however, satisfactory to be able to refer to the exact observations made on this subject by Ebermayer, and, as an indication of the extent to which snow does protect the earth, it may be stated, for instance, that on the 8th and 12th of December the temperature of the air at Vienna fell to minus 26°8 deg. Fahrenheit, while the temperature of the earth beneath the snow was no lower than plus 33°8 deg., and four feet below it was 42°8 deg. So long as the snow lies the variations of temperature under the earth's surface are very slight.

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We commend to the notice of our musical readers "Harberd's Musical Library" and "The Penny Melodist" (H. E. Harberd and Co., 11, Red Lion Court, Fleet Street). In this volume of the "Musical Library" we are glad to see a large number of old and new favourites selected and arranged with pianoforte accompaniments under the able editorship of Dr. Holloway. For sixpence one may obtain five penny numbers of well-printed music each containing eight pages of a handy and convenient size. With respect to the "Penny Melodist" no doubt the editor desires to offer music acceptable to all parties, but we have always thought that if all the songs were arranged with pianoforte accompaniments this cheap and excellent little publication would meet with even more extended favour than it now enjoys.

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

G. W. and FLORA will be replied to next week.  
**FRANK.**—The handwriting is very good.  
**ANNIE.**—We cannot decipher the name of the respondent; for this reason his communication is omitted.  
**A NOVICE.**—We are not acquainted with the institution. Have you looked in the London Directory?  
**J. C. O'S.**—The best way is to send 1s. 6d. to the publisher; he will send the LONDON READER post-free for one quarter.  
**R. J. C.**—The so-called poetry is very much below the mark. The handwriting is good enough for the purpose named.  
**N. F.**—The cost of a patent for a new invention varies according to the length of the specification, and to the time for which the invention is patented.  
**TOM B.**—We have no faith in the article mentioned in the advertisement you have cut out and sent us; but of course there are many who hold an opposite opinion.  
**AMY, MAUD and NELLIE.**—If each of you will write your desire on a distinct sheet of paper, your requests will, in all probability, be complied with.  
**A. T.**—The last stanza of the "Ode to Spring" might have been more carefully written, but on the whole the verses are pretty and tolerably good.  
**A. M. (Glasgow).**—You can obtain the numbers through the local agent for one penny; or from the publisher, 334, Strand, by post threehalfpence.  
**W. T. A.**—Regular exercise in the open air, and cheerful society in a changed scene are the remedies usually prescribed for the inconvenience of which you complain.  
**NIL DESPERANDUM.**—Be true to your motto and persevere in the course you have for some time pursued. In addition, ask at a chemist's for some medicine which will suit your constitution at this time of year.  
**W. A. B.**—We have received the note containing the changed address. Bear in mind that silence should be considered a negative, and that we do not undertake to return rejected communications.  
**PAIRO (Bristol).**—The better opinion is that a depilatory to be efficacious must injure and disfigure the skin upon which it has been applied. After such a depilatory has been used the hair does not grow again.  
**MARRIETTA.**—The Rev. Mr. D'Orsey, of King's College, London, has, we believe, published an inexpensive work on elocution; it can be obtained by order of most of the booksellers.  
**C. C.**—If you were to do what you wish others to do it is just within the bounds of possibility that your desire might be gratified. At all events the reflection that our expectations are sometimes in excess of our performances often discloses to us a clue by which some knot—which for a long while has been hopeless, intricately held—may be disentangled.  
**M. J. (Cambridge).**—In strict phraseology there is not such a thing as butter made without cream. There is, however, a substance which passes by the name of butter, which in reality is only hog's lard softened by a little palm oil and coloured with turmeric. Impositions of this nature find out the usefulness of the analysts who are now happily established in most neighbourhoods.  
**A. W. V.**—We think that a lad of eighteen is too young to marry, because, although he is then old enough to love a girl very dearly, he is not old enough to take that care of her which she requires at her husband's hands. Besides, it is considered advisable that a husband should be at least seven years older than his wife. Twenty-five and eighteen make a very good match as far as age is concerned, but thirty and twenty-one make a better.  
**L. S. B.**—The fault we have to find with the verses is that they halt between the humorous and the pathetic. Greater care could have turned them one way or the other according as your fancy dictated. As it is, although they broken great ability on the part of the

writer, they place themselves in the position of a person who chooses two chairs instead of one and thus meet a fate that often befalls undecided persons and things.

**JOSEPHINE B.**—Bare and yeast are words which signify the same thing. To make yeast—mix one pound of flour, a quarter of a pound of brown sugar, and half an ounce of salt in two gallons of water, then boil for one hour. Before the mixture is quite cold bottle it and cork well; it will be ready for use in twenty-four hours. Pall Mall is pronounced by Londoners as if the letter "a" were used instead of the "n"; but most north-countrymen still give the words the "broad a" sound.

**SAN S.**—The seven years' absence of the husband will not legalize the wife's second marriage if it should turn out that he was living at the time she went through the form of marriage for the second time; but the wife will not incur any penalties for the second ceremony if she was absolutely without tidings of her husband during the whole of the seven years. 2. The dates of the recent eclipses of the sun are 26th of May and 19th of November 1873 and 16th of April, 1874; of these the first only was visible at Greenwich.

**JOHN J. AND FRIENDS.**—There is an old proverb which says it is bad to go courting in couples, and if that be true no good luck could attend six young fellow who go a-wooing together. Cupid avoids crowds, and will not bend his bow until the opportunity of finding his devotees really or virtually alone occurs to him. From all this preachment if you are sagacious you might learn that if each of you wrote singly, and were influenced by a trifle more consideration, you would individually stand a better chance.

**A. B. (Leicester).**—If five surgeons have been already consulted, it would seem useless to seek other advice until some further change of the part occurs. You must hope that the opinion expressed as to the improbability of such change taking place may turn out to be correct. There is nothing extraordinary about the sketch sent except the fact that you should think it necessary to send it. However, perhaps by this means and by the unusual length of your letter you have relieved your mind, and may thus have patience to bear your share of the ills that flesh is heir to.

## A FRAGMENT.

Only a broken row!  
 What then?  
 The days will come and go;  
 Filling my soul with a sleepless pain,  
 Thawing my life, as the drizzling rain,  
 Melted the early snow.  
 Only a ruined hope!  
 Indeed!  
 Where tender memories dwell;  
 Like mourners, congregate to a house of woe,  
 With the sweet, sweet "songs of long ago"  
 Changed for a tolling bell.

Only a hopeless life!  
 Yet still,  
 It passeth mortal ken,  
 How I long for those sweet, tender ways,  
 And those dear, oh, those beautiful days  
 That cannot come again.  
 Only a broken heart!  
 Ah, me!  
 A broken heart; what then?  
 Why, a sleepless pain, a dull despair;  
 A wreck on the heaving ocean, where  
 A ship yet might have been. R. D. L. E.

**LEICESTER.**—The practice of speaking in the manner known as "ventriloquism" has of late years fallen into disuse amongst the caterers for the public amusement. It is improbable that you could obtain proficiency in the art by reading about it, for there is not much more to be said than that "the art consists in emitting the vocal organs of the throat in articulation after a full breath, instead of those of the mouth." An adept in the art is required personally to show you how it is done, unless indeed your native genius will stand you in good stead.

**HOUSEKEEPER.**—To make chutney and chutney sauce: Sour apples, pared and cored, tomatoes, brown sugar and salt, raisins, of each 8 oz., common salt 4 oz., red chillies and powdered ginger, of each 2 oz., garlic and shallots, of each 1 oz.; pound the whole well, add of strong vinegar 3 quarts, lemon juice, 1 quart, and digest with frequent agitation for a month; then pour off nearly all the liquor, and bottle it. This is used for fish or meat, either hot or cold, or to flavour stews, etc. The residue is the chutney, which must be ground to a smooth paste with a stone and muller, and then put into pots or jars. It is used like mustard.

**INQUISITIVE.**—You will very likely find it less difficult to learn French than German. The French grammar you allude to is too antiquated to be recommended. Try "Ahn's First French Course," price about 1s. 6d., published by Aldeman. Ollendorf's work can be recommended for beginners in German, price about 15s., published by Simpkin and Co. Notice of Examinations for the Exams are frequently exhibited in the windows of the District Post Offices. We give you this reference because the date of the very next examination may be passed before you read this reply. The handwriting is remarkably good and is suitable for any position in life. Your letter in other respects is also very well written.

**MADLINE.**—We are afraid it is beyond our power to teach you how to make love, for love's languages is implanted in the heart by nature, who, in this instance, scorns the professor's method. Somebody has said that there are a thousand ways by which love tells its tale, and yet a lover's eye only can discover these ways, for no tongue can describe them, so delicate are they. If you love him you cannot help betraying your love to him in some way when you meet, and your instinct may be trusted to inform you of his feeling towards you. If you don't love him and are unable to detect that he loves you it may be that you are both as yet unconscious of the first dawning of love. You must wait, love is almost sure to visit you some day, for of this potent power it has been truly said: "Qui tu se voit ton maître,

Il est, il fut, ou il doit être." Therefore, if possible, take care, for love comes to us in a guise we least expected him to wear.

**M. H.**—The entry with which your verses entitled "The Daughter's Appeal," close is not in our opinion out of taste or in any other way objectionable. It is quite proper to recognize the fact that extraneous and powerful help is needed to effect a change of life and habit, the difficulty of which is often alluded to by the question, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots?" Both your pieces of versification have some merit, although they are far from having sufficient for publication; they partake more of the character of rhymes than poetry, and even in this respect bear traces of carelessness which you could have avoided. For example, the juxtaposition of the words "weather" and "whether" in lines six and seven of the "Farewell" is a great fault. As to the handwriting, careful and frequent practice will suffice without, in this instance, the aid of a master.

**BESSIE L.** wishes to correspond with a tall, dark young man about twenty-two, who is fond of home and children.

**EMMA**, eighteen, tall, dark, considered good looking, and has a little money. Respondent must be about twenty-six, tall, fair, and have a trade.

**JANE**, twenty, 5ft., brown hair, and gray eyes, wishes to correspond with a dark young man about twenty-five, who is fond of home and children.

**HILDA** wishes to correspond with a young Lieutenant in the Royal Navy or merchant navy; he must be tall, dark, loving, and fond of music and drawing.

**STANLEY JESSIE** wishes to correspond with a young midshipman in the Royal or merchant navy, who is fond of French, music and drawing, and of a loving disposition; he must be from Dublin or Meath.

**ROSIE KATE**, short, dark, and very pretty. Respondent must be tall, good looking, about twenty-four, play the piano well, and a good singer.

**T. W. S.**, thirty-three, 5ft. 8in., fair, good looking, has whiskers, and can maintain a good wife well, wishes to correspond with some young woman about thirty, must be good tempered, kind, and steady.

**C. E.**, twenty, 5ft. 10in., fair complexion, brown hair and eyes, and fond of home and music. Respondent must be about eighteen, fair, pretty, affectionate, and fond of home.

**TILLY**, tall, and considered handsome, wishes to correspond with a fair young man about twenty-three, he must be nimble on his feet, and fond of dancing, as she is a first-rate dancer, and can speak French.

**EDITH W.**, seventeen, tall, very good figure, dark complexion, dark-brown hair, light-gray eyes, an excellent housekeeper, and a good singer. Respondent must be a midshipman, tall and dark.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

**PERSEVERANCE** is responded to by—"Trump," twenty-one, dark hair and eyes, affectionate, domesticated, and fond of home.

**GEORGE T. B.**—"Josephine," who thinks she is all he requires, and will be glad to know his position in life.

**REUBEN W. B.**—"M. H. H.," who is loving, fond of children, and would make him a good little wife.

**A. B. C. B.**—"Alice May," an orphan, and thinks that she is all he wishes.

**LIZZIE H. D. N.**—"William," twenty-nine, tall, dark complexioned, affectionate, and has travelled much.

**LUCY B.**—"Little Jack," twenty-five, 5ft. 4in., a tradesman, light hair, blue eyes, fond of home, and would make a good husband.

**GRACE B.**—"Achilles," twenty-two, 5ft. 9in., dark hair and whiskers, considered good looking, and has an income of 400l. a year from trade.

**AURIESE B.**—"S. B.," thirty-five, 5ft. 9in., is the possessor of a few hundred pounds, and thinks she will suit him.

**JOE B.**—"Ada," who has a domesticated and loving disposition, and who believes that in other respects she will meet his views.

**LILIAN B.**—"Lonely Fred," thirty-five, 5ft. 9in., a widower, without encumbrance. Is fond of home and music, would make her a good and loving husband and has an income of 104l. per annum.

**MADELINE B.**—"Bacchus," a young banker's clerk, twenty-two, dark, rather stout, considered good looking, holding an excellent position in the City, and in receipt of good salary.

**MARY MAY B.**—"Claude H.," thirty-four, fair, medium height, in a good position, and possesses several hundred pounds, a total abstainer, of refined tastes and habits, of good principles, and thinks he would suit her if only known.

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